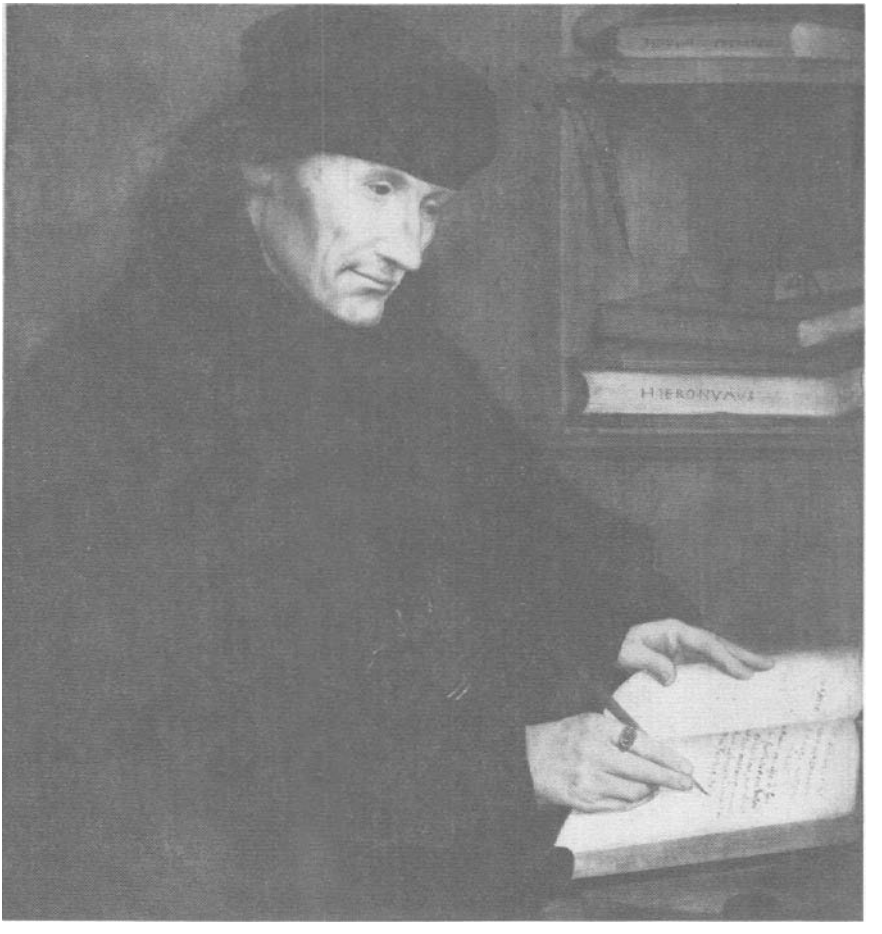
COLLECTED WORKS OF ERASMUS

VOLUME 61



Erasmus by Quinten Metsys, 1517
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COLLECTED WORKS OF ERASMUS

PATRISTIC SCHOLARSHIP
THE EDITION OF ST JEROME

edited, translated and annotated by

James F. Brady and John C. Olin

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Collected Works of Erasmus

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other principal writings. The edition is planned
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Preface

This volume of the CWE is devoted to Erasmus' edition of the works of St Jerome, the first and most important of his many editions of the Fathers of the church. Originally published by Johann Froben in Basel in 1516, it consisted of nine folio volumes, the first four of which were Erasmus' chief responsibility. These volumes contained Jerome's letters and a variety of other writings, and they were prefaced by a letter of dedication, a life of Jerome, and indexes. Revised editions appeared in 1524–6 and 1533–4, and several reprints were published both during and after Erasmus' lifetime.

Our volume is the first presentation of this outstanding work since the sixteenth century, albeit only in selected parts and on a very reduced scale and, of course, in English translation. Wallace K. Ferguson published a composite Latin text of Erasmus' *Life of Jerome* in his *Erasmi opuscula* (The Hague 1931), but nothing else from the early editions, with the exception of several prefatory letters in Allen's monumental *Erasmi epistolae* and in CWE, has seen the light of day in more recent times. Erasmus himself felt that he had expended so much labour editing and annotating the letters of Jerome that they should be included among his own works, and he listed them in the Botzheim catalogue (see CWE 24 697; cf CWE 23 xiii–xiv). Neither the Basel *Opera omnia* of 1538–40 nor the Leiden *Opera omnia* of 1703–6, however, included them, and – even more curiously – they failed to publish the splendid biography of the saint Erasmus composed. We hope our volume will serve, at least in part, to remedy these deficiencies.

There are obvious problems in including Erasmus' editions of classical and patristic authors in collections of his works. The basic texts, after all, are not Erasmus'. He has, however, edited and introduced them, sometimes annotated them, and not infrequently translated them if the originals were in Greek. His achievement in this field was extremely important and his contribution enormous, particularly in the case of his editions of the Fathers. Among those the edition of St Jerome holds pride of place. Jerome was the early Father he most highly esteemed, on this edition he worked the longest,

and to it he contributed the most. Our aim has been to give some measure of the character and value of Erasmus' achievement.

In view of the nature and extent of the edition it was inevitable that we should select parts of it. These had to be, of course, both important in themselves and representative of Erasmus' contribution. In our introduction we describe the edition as a whole and discuss Erasmus' great interest in St Jerome, thus setting the stage and providing the context for the selections we have chosen. The first of these are the preliminary pieces in Erasmus' edition itself: his letter of dedication to Archbishop William Warham of Canterbury and his *Life of Jerome*. Next come the longest and most substantial prefaces in the *Opera*, those that introduce part 1 and part 3 in volume II of the 1516 edition, and a letter addressed to Archbishop Warham that appeared as a preface to volume II in the 1524 edition. We have also included two prefaces by the Amerbach brothers, who collaborated with Erasmus on the edition. These appear on the title-page and title-page verso of volume V of the 1516 edition; since they are not Erasmus' composition we have placed them at the end of our volume. The other selections are drawn from Erasmus' extensive notes and comments on the letters of St Jerome. We chose six key letters (out of well over a hundred) and have presented them in full with Erasmus' summaries (*argumenta*) and annotations (*scholia*) in order to show how Erasmus dealt with this important segment of Jerome's works.

Further information about the texts and their sources will be found in our introductions and notes. The translations are ours except in the following instances. For the two letters to Archbishop Warham we have used the English translation by Sir Roger Mynors of letters 396 and 1451 in CWE 3 and 10 respectively. The English translation of the six letters of St Jerome (with some slight revision) is that of W.H. Fremantle in *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, second series, volume VI: *Saint Jerome: Letters and Select Works* (New York 1893). We want to acknowledge our debt and express our thanks to St Joseph's Seminary in Yonkers, New York, where in the Archbishop Corrigan Library we were given generous access to Erasmus' 1516 edition of the works of St Jerome; and we are particularly grateful to the librarian, the late Sister Ellen Gaffney, for her kindness and help. The St Joseph's Seminary copy has been our mainstay, although this and other editions of Jerome have been consulted and used in several other libraries. The CWE is indebted for its continuance to the support of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

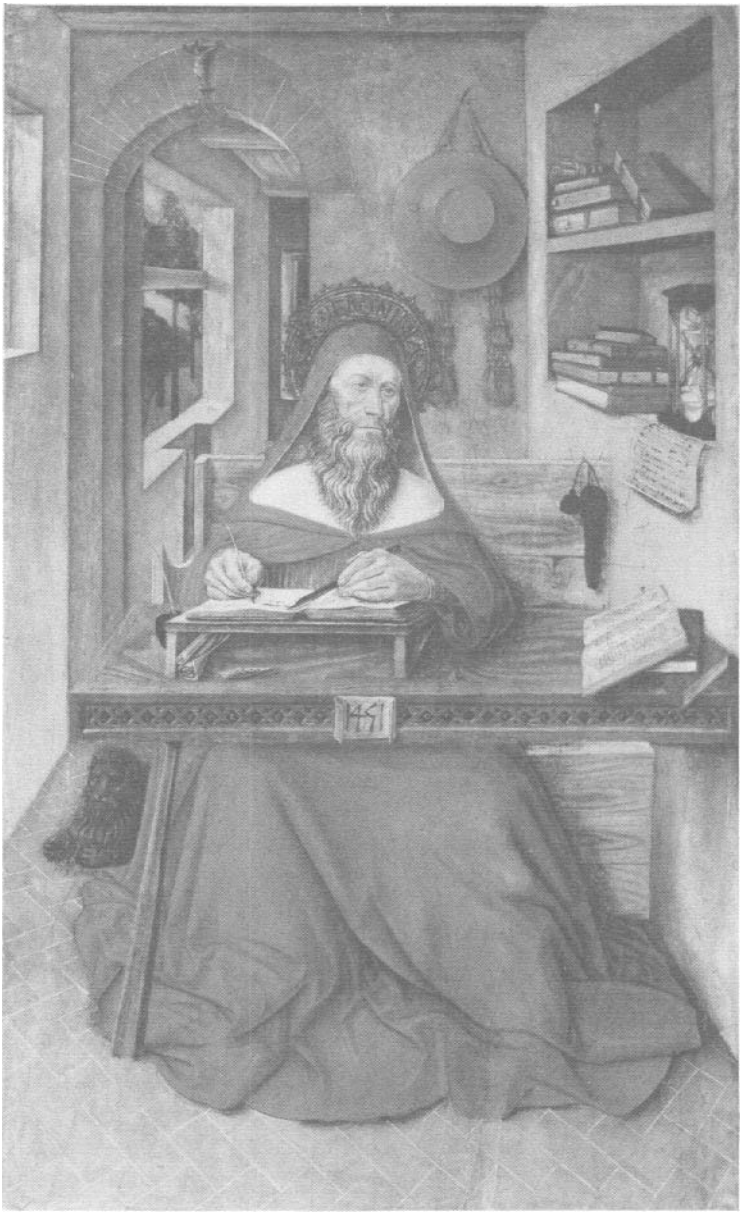
The volume is the result of our collaboration over the course of quite a few years. We hesitate to tally them. JFB took prime responsibility for the translation, JCO for the introduction and annotation, but the whole represents our common effort and joint contribution. *Amicitia aequalitas.*

JFB and JCO

Introduction

In the portrait of Erasmus by Quinten Metsys at Hampton Court the name HIERONYMUS is prominently inscribed on the page ends of a book lying on a shelf in the centre of the picture. The portrait appears as the frontispiece in this volume and can serve well as an introduction to its content and in a sense as a representation of its theme. The painting vividly expresses the affinity and the bond between Erasmus and Jerome that we are now going to explore.[1]

There was a humanist cult of St Jerome as well as a more religious and devotional one in the late medieval and Renaissance periods. We know this from the art and literature of those times, and several recent studies have brought it effectively to our attention.[2] We know too that Erasmus from his early years revered Jerome both as saint and scholar. The Brethren of the Common Life with whom he had studied and lived as a child and young man were named *Hieronymiani* because of their devotion to Jerome, and P.S. Allen suggests that Erasmus' interest stems from this association.[3] He himself tells us in a preface in the edition that in his youth he 'found an uncommon delight' in Jerome's writings.[4] There is certainly ample evidence to bear this out. As a young canon at Steyn he had read and copied all the letters of Jerome and had drawn lessons from them that explain both his attachment to their author and his early formation as a humanist. A letter to a fellow Augustinian, Cornelis Gerard, written in 1489, is most revealing in this regard.[5] He comments that if those who despise poetry and good writing 'looked carefully at Jerome's letters, they would see that lack of culture is not holiness, nor cleverness impiety.' Jerome's letters had become for him a literary treasure and an arsenal of arguments against the 'barbarians' assaults,' and drawing on Jerome as well as St Augustine he undertook to write a work, his *Antibarbari*, refuting these opponents of good literature.[6] In a poem he wrote at about the same time he has Jerome speaking to him and urging him to develop style and to pursue both classical and scriptural studies.[7] The attitudes and judgments that will characterize



St Jerome in His Study
Antonio da Fabriano (fifteenth century)
Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore

Erasmus throughout his life have already begun to find expression. Jerome, however, was not his only model or inspiration. He was already well versed in the literature of antiquity, and he had discovered authors of his own time 'who approach quite closely the ancient ideal of eloquence.'[8] He was keenly aware of the renaissance of art and letters then taking place, and he credited Lorenzo Valla especially for attacking the 'barbarians' and helping to restore good literature and style.

From the start, however, Jerome occupied a special place in Erasmus' studies and scholarly plans. By 1500, soon after his return to the continent from a memorable trip to England where he had met John Colet and the young Thomas More, Erasmus went to work on a project to restore and edit the letters of Jerome and write a commentary on them. It was his first major undertaking and was closely linked to what Georges Chantraine has called his 'theological vocation.'[9] Colet, who had been lecturing at Oxford on the Epistles of St Paul, left a deep impression on him. Erasmus applauded the English scholar for doing battle with the 'squalid mob' of modern theologians and seeking to revive 'that ancient true theology,' and he thought now of joining him in this endeavour.[10] Like Colet, he would devote himself to sacred literature and the reform of theology. His work on Jerome was a primary and essential part of that larger programme. Several letters in late 1500 and early 1501 explain his intentions.[11] Writing to his friend Jacob Batt, who was then in the service of Anna van Borssele, lady of Veere, a prospective patroness, Erasmus urges him to plead his cause and secure her support for his scholarly plans:

> Say that I have a large project on hand: to restore the entire text of Jerome, which has been spoiled and garbled and confused by the ignorance of divines, for I have found many passages in his writings that are corrupt or spurious, and to restore the Greek. By so doing I shall cast light on the ancient world and illuminate his literary achievement, which I venture to say nobody hitherto has appreciated.[12]

What prompts him to this task, he tells us in another letter, is 'the goodness of the saintly man who of all Christians was by common consent the best scholar and best writer ... the supreme champion and expositor and ornament of our faith.'[13] Emending and elucidating Jerome is a big enterprise and will be difficult, he declares, but it will rescue him from the sad neglect into which he has fallen:

> First of all, how difficult it will be to wipe away the errors which in the course of long ages have so profoundly penetrated the text. Secondly, look at the

Johann Froben
Hans Holbein the Younger, c 1522–3
Hampton Court, Her Majesty the Queen
Reproduced by gracious permission
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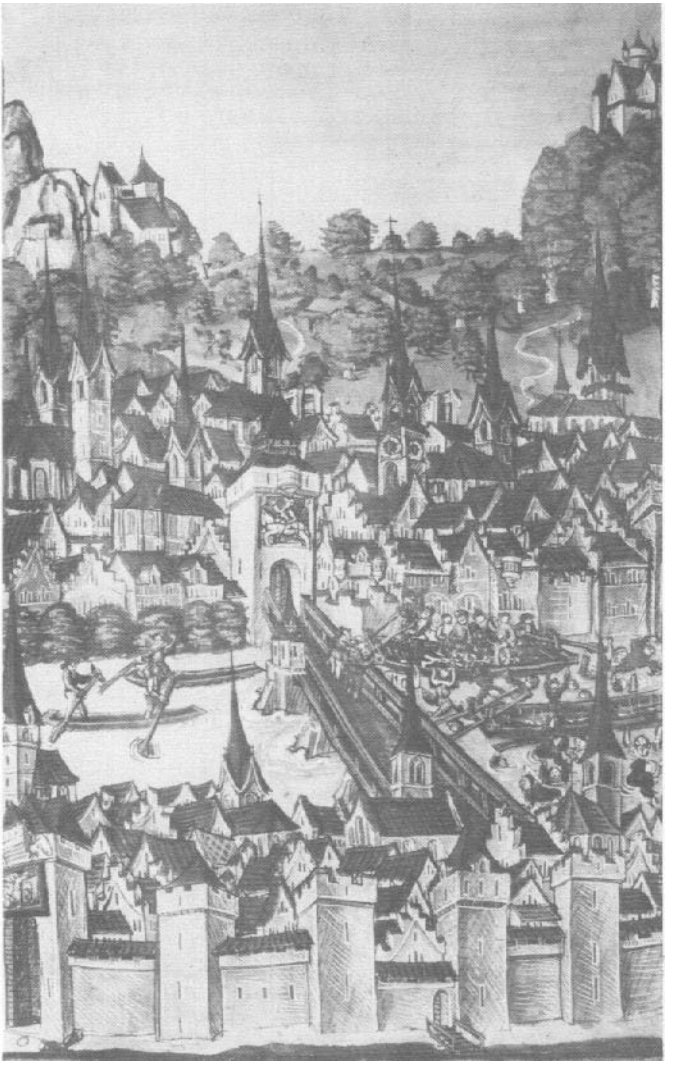
> classical learning, the Greek scholarship, the histories to be found in him, and all those stylistic and rhetorical accomplishments in which he not only outstrips all Christian writers, but even seems to rival Cicero himself. For my part at any rate, unless my affection for that saintly man is leading me astray, when I compare Jerome's prose with Cicero's, I seem to find something lacking in even the prince of prose writers. There is in our author such variety, such solidity of content, such fluency of argument, and while it is very difficult to demonstrate this kind of artistry in the works of good stylists, it is nevertheless extremely helpful. This is what I trust I may be able to do, provided the saint himself comes to my aid; and I hope that, as a result, those who have hitherto admired Jerome for his reputation as a stylist may now admit that they never before understood the nature of his stylistic power.[14]

This great undertaking, which he so enthusiastically set himself to in 1500, was not completed until 1516. In September that year Johann Froben published in Basel the corrected and annotated edition of Jerome that Erasmus had long before envisaged. In the intervening years other projects, of course, occupied Erasmus, and several of his most famous and important works appeared. He continued especially to work on Holy Scripture – preparing a commentary on St Paul, undertaking an improved translation of the New Testament, editing the Greek text, annotating.[15] He wrote Colet in 1504 that he was eager 'to approach sacred literature full sail, full gallop' and that he intended to spend all the rest of his life upon it.[16] Earlier that year he had discovered a manuscript of annotations by Lorenzo Valla collating the Vulgate text of the New Testament with the Greek, and he subsequently published it in Paris.[17] It had considerable influence on him, but in these endeavours Jerome was his chief inspiration and guide.[18] He knew that he followed in the saint's footsteps and continued his labours. Fifteen-sixteen, the year the edition of Jerome appeared, also saw the culmination of Erasmus' work on Holy Scripture. In March that year Froben published his Latin and Greek New Testament with his extensive annotations. The two great enterprises were complementary, and they came to fruition together.

From 1511 to 1514 Erasmus was at Cambridge, where he taught Greek and lectured on Jerome and where he resumed work on both Scripture and Jerome.[19] He took up once again the preparation of an emended and annotated edition of Jerome's letters. 'In the course of the last two years,' he wrote in July 1514 to Servatius Rogerus, his prior at Steyn, as he was *en route* from England to Basel, 'I have, among many other things, revised St Jerome's epistles; I have slain with daggers the spurious and interpolated passages, while I have elucidated the obscure parts in my notes.'[20] In May 1512 the Parisian printer Josse Bade had written Erasmus asking for the new



View of Basel
Diebold Schilling, Chronicle of Lucerne f 113 verso
Zentralbibliothek, Luzern

edition of the letters he was preparing. 'I have put about a rumour that I am waiting for you to furnish me with a better text,' Bade wrote, and he offered him fifteen florins for the revision.[21] The work, however, was not yet ready for the press. By the time it was, Erasmus had changed printers and had joined forces with Johann Froben in Basel.

The story of that transaction is interesting.[22] Some time in late 1513, a not too trustworthy bookseller and printer's agent, Franz Birckmann, diverted to the Basel firm the manuscript of an expanded version of the *Adagia* and other material that the scholar had given him to deliver to Bade in Paris. Whether Erasmus connived or colluded in this diversion is moot, but it probably did not distress him. He was not entirely satisfied with the quality of Bade's work or with the adequacy of his Greek fount, and he thought that a reprint of an earlier Aldine edition of the *Adagia* the Basel firm had published in August 1513, although pirated, was handsomely done. It is very probable too that Erasmus knew that the Basel printer Johann Amerbach and his partner Johann Froben were preparing a complete edition of the works of St Jerome and that this in particular drew him to Basel. At any rate Erasmus left England in July 1514 and made his way to the bustling city on the great bend of the Rhine. In the words of P.S. Allen, Erasmus' decision 'brought together the greatest scholar and the greatest printer in Transalpine Europe.'[23]

Johann Amerbach had died the previous December, but his enterprise to publish Jerome continued. It had been Amerbach's lifelong ambition to publish complete editions of the four Doctors of the western church. He had brought out an edition of St Ambrose in 1492 and of St Augustine in 1506 and had started work on Jerome as early as 1507. 'He had entertained the hope,' his sons Bruno and Basilius tell us, 'that if the splendid theology of ancient times should come to life again that prickly and frigid kind of sophistical theology would have less influence, and our Christians would be more generous and genuine.'[24] How admirably and succinctly that sentiment is expressed! It was a view that Erasmus wholeheartedly shared. The elder Amerbach had gone to considerable effort and expense in gathering manuscripts of Jerome and in collating and restoring his writings, and he had employed several notable scholars in this task – Johann Reuchlin, Conradus Pellicanus, Johann Kuno, a learned Dominican who has been called Erasmus' precursor in Basel, and Gregor Reisch, the Carthusian prior at Freiburg.[25] He had also seen to the rigorous education of his sons, Bruno, Basilius, and Bonifacius, so that they could assist in these endeavours. (In his dedicatory preface to the edition Erasmus praises their contribution very highly.[26]) After their father's death they dutifully continued his undertaking together with Johann Froben. It was at this point that Erasmus entered the

Basel scene, bringing his own work on the letters of Jerome as well as other important materials with him. 'If he had come to us at the right time,' Amerbach's sons rather querulously declared, 'he alone would have sufficed for every task.'[27]

Erasmus' responsibility was the letters and other treatises of Jerome that went into the first four volumes of the edition, although he helped and advised on the project throughout. The Amerbachs, who had great regard for his expertise, called him 'a man of the surest discernment,'[28] and he became, so to speak, the editor-in-chief. We have several accounts of his labours in emending and editing Jerome's text – the labours of Hercules, as he writes in the dedicatory letter to Warham:

> And so I despised all the difficulties, and like a modern Hercules I set out on my most laborious but most glorious campaign, taking the field almost unaided against all the monsters of error. I cannot think that Hercules consumed as much energy in taming a few monsters as I did in abolishing so many thousand blunders. And so I conceive that not a little more advantage will accrue to the world from my work than his labours which are on the lips of all men. To start with, by comparing many copies, early copies especially, and sometimes adding my conjectures as the traces of the script suggested, I have removed the blunders and restored the correct reading. The Greek words, which had been either omitted or wrongly supplied, I have replaced. I have done the same with the Hebrew also; but in this department what I was less able to manage for myself I have achieved with the assistance of others, and especially of the brothers Amerbach, Bruno, Basilius, and Bonifacius, whom their excellent father Johannes Amerbach equipped with the three tongues as though they were born especially for the revival of ancient texts.[29]

Writing in May 1515 to Pope Leo X, to whom he had originally intended to dedicate the edition – 'the best of all theologians is commended by the name of the best of all pontiffs' – he described the great task of correcting and annotating Jerome's letters and the progress of the work in Basel, where 'the whole of Jerome is being born again.'[30] In a forceful statement he made clear the need and justification for restoring Jerome:

> I saw clearly that St Jerome is chief among the theologians of the Latin world, and is in fact almost the only writer we have who deserves the name of theologian (not that I condemn the rest, but men who seem distinguished on their own are thrown into the shade by his brilliance when they are compared with him); indeed he has such splendid gifts that Greece itself with all its learning can scarcely produce a man to be matched with him. What Roman eloquence, what mastery of the tongues, what a range of knowledge in all

> antiquity and all history! And then his retentive memory, his happy knack of combining unexpected things, his perfect command of Holy Scripture! Above all, with his burning energy and the divine inspiration in that amazing heart, he can at the same moment delight us with his eloquence, instruct us with his learning, and sweep us away with his religious force. And yet the one man we possess who richly deserves to be read by all is the one author so much corrupted, so mixed with dirt and filth, that even scholars cannot understand him![31]

Erasmus complained frequently and vigorously about the corruption and neglect of Jerome's writings and about the great difficulty in restoring them, but we have little detail about his working methods or the actual circumstances of his editorial labours.[32] The annotations or *scholia* that accompany the letters do give us some information about the variant readings and textual problems he encountered and about the choices and corrections he made. It is also quite clear that he examined and compared texts over the years. At Cambridge, he tells us, he collated 'a large number of ancient manuscripts,' and the Amerbach brothers state that their father had procured copies of Jerome's works from 'innumerable libraries' and that 'nearly all the libraries of Germany' supplied texts, but with a couple of minor exceptions it is impossible to identify these sources.[33] A manuscript of the letters was borrowed from the monastery of Reichenau in November 1515, and two known but unimportant texts came from the monastery of Echternach. The basis for Erasmus' edition, at least in so far as Jerome's letters are concerned, appears to have been earlier printed editions of the letters, of which there were many.[34] Fritz Husner claims that Jacob Saccon's Lyon edition of 1508 was Erasmus' working copy and finds evidence that several other printed editions were also used: Nicholas Kessler's Basel edition of 1492, Peter Schoeffer's Mainz edition of 1470, and the Sweynheym-Pannartz Roman edition of 1470.[35] A more detailed or exact accounting of Erasmus' sources cannot be made.

We get a glimpse of Erasmus' concrete editorial efforts in an exchange of correspondence with Gregor Reisch, who had been working on Jerome's letters before Erasmus came to Basel. Erasmus wrote Reisch shortly after his arrival to discuss a change in the order and grouping of the material he would edit and to ask his opinion about some readings that puzzled him in several of Jerome's letters. He also inquired about using any manuscripts or notes Reisch might have.[36] The Carthusian prior replied with praise for Erasmus and great respect but had little else to contribute. He agreed with Erasmus that the falsely ascribed and spurious should be separated from the genuine writings of Jerome, but he defended his own arrangement of the material. He had no manuscripts or notes to offer Erasmus, nor was he able to help with any of the troublesome passages Erasmus had asked about.[37]

Erasmus remained in Basel until mid-March 1515, when he left to visit England, in part to do further work there on the edition. He took his materials on Jerome with him.[38] He returned to Basel in July and stayed until the following May, when he again departed for England and the Low Countries. Froben published Erasmus' New Testament, which was dedicated to the pope, in March. The printing of the first four volumes of the edition of Jerome was finished by June, and copies were sent to Archbishop Warham of Canterbury, to whom Erasmus had now decided to dedicate the work.[39] The entire edition was completed later that summer. Bruno Amerbach wrote Erasmus in early September to say that seven sets of the edition were being sent him, as he had requested.[40] The work went on sale at the Frankfurt book fair that month. Erasmus reported in a letter on October 6 that he had seen it on sale in Antwerp, and he commented in another letter that it had sold out in Brussels by early November.[41] The edition was expensive,[42] but from all accounts it was beginning to circulate widely.

The edition consisted of nine folio volumes. It was the first *opera omnia* of St Jerome and the first and most important of Erasmus' many editions of the Fathers.[43] By virtue of its erudition, critical acuity, and improved canon and text it is an impressive achievement and a landmark in the field of Renaissance patristic scholarship.[44] Indeed some notable editions of Jerome had preceded Erasmus', but none matched his in scope or quality. The first four volumes contained letters, polemical treatises, exegetical prefaces, and a variety of other writings, with volume II reserved for falsely ascribed and spurious pieces. The remaining five volumes contained Jerome's scriptural commentaries, with a trilingual quadruplex psalter appended in volume VIII. Erasmus edited and annotated the first four volumes, supplying prefaces, summaries or *argumenta* for the letters and treatises, copious annotations or *scholia*, and critical comments or *censurae* for the material in volume II. The Amerbach brothers apparently were in charge of the other five volumes, the prefaces being in their name.[45] Erasmus states that they 'shared Jerome with me, on the understanding that everything outside the letters should be their responsibility.'[46] As we have mentioned, Erasmus dedicated the work to his friend and patron Archbishop William Warham of Canterbury, and he wrote a long dedicatory letter to him as a general preface to the edition. He also composed a life of St Jerome to serve as an introduction to his writings. These two pieces, plus extensive indexes that are in the nature of detailed tables of contents for the nine volumes, are at the head of the edition, preceding the foliation in volume I.

Erasmus begins his letter of dedication by observing how the ancients treasured and preserved the works of outstanding authors, but how in later times the writings of Christian authors, 'men inspired by the Holy Spirit,'

have been allowed to perish and to be foully mutilated and corrupted. He offers an interesting historical analysis, typical of his Renaissance perspective, to account for this. Governments deteriorated, bishops abandoned their tasks, learning sadly declined, good authors fell out of use, and ignorant, impudent men promoted others in their place – 'Occam, Durandus, Capreolus, Lyra, Burgensis, and even poorer stuff than that.' It was in this dark age that Jerome, who above all others should have been preserved 'complete and uncorrupted,' suffered such monstrous neglect. This realization carries Erasmus into a ringing panegyric of the saint's incomparable gifts and qualities – his mental endowments, his eloquence and style, his learning, his knowledge of languages, his mastery of Scripture, his lofty character, and his holy life.

Erasmus then expounds on his labours in restoring the corrupted and adulterated text of Jerome. He is obsessive about the difficulty and tedium and weariness involved. 'I believe that the writing of his books cost Jerome less effort than I spent in the restoring of them,' he declares – a refrain he frequently employed. There is undoubtedly some hyperbole in Erasmus' many complaints about the neglect of the saint and the burdens of his own editorial labours, but the task nevertheless of collating and emending and restoring the authentic Jerome and of annotating his letters and treatises was an arduous one, and Erasmus' achievement was widely appreciated and highly acclaimed. The Louvain scholar Adrianus Barlandus voiced the admiration and homage of many when he wrote that 'he gave us a new Jerome, so well restored and furnished with summaries and notes that he might seem a different author from the one we used to read before; for he has further separated out the pieces falsely ascribed to him and provided his letters with summaries and notes which are so brief, clear, interesting, and elegantly expressed that they give the greatest satisfaction.'[47] And Erasmus, of course, knew that his difficulties and labours in restoring Jerome were eminently worth while. 'It is a river of gold, a well stocked library, that a man acquires who possesses Jerome and nothing else,' he asserts in a striking sentence towards the end of his preface,[48] and he was well aware that a man 'does not possess him, on the other hand, if his text is like what used to be in circulation, all confusion and impurity.'

The high praise of Jerome is continued in the life of the saint that Erasmus composed for the edition. The *Hieronymi Stridonensis vita*, however, has other dimensions beyond the purely panegyric. It is the first critical biography of Jerome and, in the words of Wallace K. Ferguson, who carefully collated and edited the early text, 'one of the finest examples of Erasmus' scholarly work.'[49] It is amazing that the *Life* has not been better known or that it has not had a more prominent place in the Erasmian corpus.

We feel that a presentation of it has been long overdue and that it is the most important selection in this volume. Its character and importance can be briefly stated. Eugene Rice has called it 'a self-portrait.'[50] Joseph Coppens has said that it 'is above all a plea of the humanist for ideas and reforms that were particularly dear to him.'[51] Erasmus saw in Jerome an ideal and a model for the Christian scholar. As might be expected, the *Life of Jerome* fully reveals Erasmus' understanding of the Father and the central role he played in Erasmus' programme for theological renewal and reform.

Yet the historical authenticity and validity of the life are sound. Erasmus' accomplishment in achieving this is a tribute to his perception, learning, and skill. The Archbishop of Mainz, for one, wished that he would write other lives of the saints in the same masterful style.[52] In its exordium or opening section Erasmus affirms the need for truthfulness in portraying the saints – 'truth has its own power matched by no artifice' – and declares that his inquiry will be based on solid evidence and above all on the writings of Jerome himself. His words constitute an incisive statement of a critical historical approach, and they are a prime example of the development of modern historical method within the context of Renaissance humanism.[53] Erasmus' critical faculty was indeed an essential element of his scholarship and style. In addition, he possessed a 'historical mindedness,' that is, a perspective on the past and an acute sense of the historicity of things. What is more, he was profoundly conscious of the relevance of the past to the present. That Christianity was not simply an abstract credal formulary or an intricate theological system, that is, that the gospel precepts were vitally relevant to the needs and problems of his time was one of his deepest convictions.[54] Erasmus' reform efforts were grounded in this recognition, and both his *Life of Jerome* and the entire edition bear witness to it.

The *Life* is followed by the indexes, already mentioned, which list the writings of Jerome in a variety of categories, including dubious, spurious, and lost works.[55] In his dedicatory letter to Warham Erasmus had explained how he organized and divided the part of the Jerome corpus he took as his own province.[56] In volume I he placed Jerome's 'pieces of moral instruction by exhortation and example, because what deals with the ordering of life deserves attention first.' Under this rubric he grouped in order forty-seven letters of St Jerome, his lives of three early ascetics (Paul the Hermit, St Hilarion, and Malchus), and his *Catalogue of Ecclesiastical Writers* (more often known as *De viris illustribus*). The *Catalogue* is accompanied in a parallel column by the Greek translation by Jerome's friend Sophronius. Erasmus wrote a pithy preface for his annotations to the *Catalogue*, commenting on the deplorable loss of so much of ancient Christian literature. We have chosen three letters from volume I to illustrate Erasmus' summaries and

OMNIVM OPERVM
DIVI EVSEBII HIERONYMI
STRIDONENSIS

TOMVS PRI MVS

ΠΑΡΑΙΝΕΤΙΚΑ VIDELICET EA
QVAE AD VITAM RECTE
INSTITVENDAM PER
TINENT COMPLE-
CTENS VNA CVM AR
GVMENTIS ET SCHOLIIS
DES. ERASMI ROTERODAMI
CVIVS OPERA POTISSI
MVM EMENDATA SVNT
QVAE ANTE HAC
ERANT DEPRA
VATISSIMA
ET INSTAVRA
TA EA QVAE PRIVS
ERANT MVTILA.

APVD INCLYTAM BASILEAM
EX ACVRATISSIMA OFFI-
CINA FROBENIANA.

Hieronymi opera 1 (Basel: Froben 1516) title-page
Öffentliche Bibliothek, University of Basel

annotations. They are the first, second, and twenty-first letters in Erasmus' volume (Epp 14, 52, and 22 in the standard enumeration of Jerome's letters) and important ones in the Jerome corpus.[57] Erasmus' commentary on them is rich and varied.

Erasmus reserved the second volume of his 1516 edition for spurious works and the works of others, and he divided it into three parts.[58] In the first he placed pieces that had been wrongly attributed to Jerome but that nevertheless had some merit and were worth reading. A well-known letter to Demetriades on virginity, the authenticity of which had frequently been questioned, was his first entry among the forty *spuria* assembled in this section. A famous letter addressed to Jerome's disciples Paula and Eustochium on the assumption of the Virgin Mary was another. In the second part he gathered the writings of other authors that had a connection with the Jerome corpus. There are some very important items included here: Rufinus' writings against Jerome, four letters of St Augustine, Gennadius' *Catalogus scriptorum illustrium*, which continued the similar *Catalogue* Jerome had compiled (and Erasmus placed in volume I), the *Regula monachorum* composed in the early fifteenth century by the Spanish Hieronymite Lope de Olmedo from Jerome's writings, and a sermon in praise of St Jerome by the elder Pier Paolo Vergerio.[59] In the third part of the volume, 'a kind of cesspool,' to use Erasmus' own forceful and expressive words, he dumped the worthless trash that some impostor had the impudence to ascribe to Jerome. Erasmus lost no opportunity to berate this 'impostor.' This collection of deplorable *indocta* contains such specimens as a spurious exchange of letters between Jerome and Pope Damasus, a popular but in part fictitious late medieval *Regula monacharum* attributed to Jerome, and four pseudonymous lives of Jerome that Erasmus ridiculed in his own *Life*.[60] He did not annotate the works in this volume in his usual way. Instead he prefaced each piece in parts 1 and 3 with a relatively short *censura*, in which he commented on the content or style of the writing and its authorship.

The *censura* prefacing the spurious letter to Demetriades is typical of Erasmus' critical evaluations in part 1:

> A very erudite and eloquent letter but one which, to say nothing else, the style clearly shows is not Jerome's. Besides, it is not reasonable that Jerome wrote twice to the same virgin about the same matters. St Augustine seems to have some suspicion that it was written by a Pelagian heretic because some things in it smack of the doctrines of the Pelagians, especially since Pelagius declared that he himself wrote to Demetriades. Bede thinks that it is the letter of a Julian heretic. Moreover the erroneous attribution arose because Jerome also wrote to this virgin on a similar topic.[61]

The trash in part 3, however, evoked *censurae* that were far more stinging and more irate. The sharp comments about the author of the spurious *Regula monacharum* are a good example:

> I myself cannot wonder enough at the remarkable impudence of the man. He speaks with such authority you would think he is one of the apostles. And this impostor, more fortunate than Paul himself, enjoyed while still in the body a divine vision and spent entire months, it seems, among the seraphim. Then restored to the body (although he had previously said he had his vision while in the body), he returned to us gifted with a knowledge of future events – for such marvels does this bogus Jerome write about himself. He would certainly be Jerome if he had been able to change his strange babble and most absurd line of talk. Now projecting ears betray an ass, and all his language cries out that he did not deserve to take the place of a servant in St Jerome's kitchen. But attend now, reader, to the fine preface, in which he does not express the aged Jerome, as he tries to do, but some drunken person crazed both with wine and with age.[62]

Erasmus had a particular animus against this 'impostor.' He attacks the 'rascal' in a similar vein in his preface to part 3 and holds him responsible for most of the other patristic *spuria* he discusses.[63] He also added a short *censura* to the listing of the *Regula monacharum* in the index to alert the reader to the deception the man had perpetrated. 'A most impudent impostor, whoever he was,' he wrote, 'represents this rule as written by a centenarian Jerome, although Prosper records that he died in his ninety-first year, unless perhaps he came back to life to write this very fine rule.'[64]

The critical acumen and judgment Erasmus displayed in this portion of his edition have been highly praised, and his authoritative identification of spurious works has been hailed as one of his most valuable contributions.[65] His forte as an editor as well as his main preoccupation, it would seem, was in this field. The two long prefaces he wrote to introduce the first and third parts of this volume contain much of interest and importance but are focused for the most part on the widespread incidence of false attributions and on the problems involved in discerning what is genuine from what has been wrongly ascribed to an author. As Rice has pointed out, Erasmus' judgments here were 'overwhelmingly stylistic.'[66] He held to the axiom *le style est l'homme-même*, and the discourse on style, which he sums up as 'an imaging of the mind in its every facet,' in the first preface is a most astute exposition. He sees the style of each author as distinctive:

> The surest sign and truly the Lydian stone [in identifying an author], as they

> say, is the character and quality of speech. As each individual has his own appearance, his own voice, his own character and disposition, so each has his own style of writing. And the quality of mind is manifest in speech even more than the likeness of the body is reflected in a mirror.[67]

In his preface to the third part of the volume he spares no abuse in his assault on the 'wretch' whom he blames for the worthless *spuria* that have been attributed to Jerome and other early Fathers. He believes that one individual, whom he identifies as an Augustinian Eremite, is guilty of them all. Whatever the plumage, he writes, the voice reveals that it is the same cuckoo.[68] Both of these prefaces have been included here.

In the third volume of his edition Erasmus placed Jerome's polemical and apologetic works, those writings which, as he explains, 'are devoted to refuting the errors of heretics and the calumnies of his opponents.' There were many such – letters, treatises, and dialogues against a considerable number of people with whom he took issue: Helvidius, Jovinian, Vigilantius, his arch-enemy Rufinus, the Luciferians, the Pelagians, and others. Volume III also included Jerome's correspondence with St Augustine (eight letters to Augustine, seven from) and many other letters that have a controversial or doctrinal content. We have selected two of the latter for inclusion in our volume: Jerome's first letter to Pope Damasus and his reply to the Roman orator Magnus defending the use of pagan literature by Christians (Epp 15 and 70 in the standard enumeration).[69] The letter to Magnus has been called 'Jerome's handbook of Christian humanism' and is quoted at length in Erasmus' *Antibarbari*.[70] Erasmus prefaced his volume III with a brief explanation and extenuation of Jerome's often excessive vehemence and invective against heretics and calumniators.

Erasmus' volume IV was reserved for exegetical works, that is, letters, prefaces, and other pieces pertaining to Holy Scripture, though not the major commentaries of Jerome, which were the responsibility of the Amerbachs. Included in volume IV were Jerome's translations of two homilies of Origen on the Song of Songs and of Eusebius' *Loca hebraica* and Philo's *Nomina hebraica*, as well as several works whose authorship by Jerome Erasmus questioned. We include here the first entry in Erasmus' volume: Jerome's letter to Paulinus of Nola on the study of Scripture (Ep 53 in the standard enumeration).[71] One of the highlights of this selection is a lengthy annotation in which Erasmus relates 'a very humorous incident,' a story of an encounter with a pretentious and obtuse English Franciscan, Henry Standish, later bishop of St Asaph and a court preacher.[72] Thomas More refers scathingly to Standish, 'of whom you made honourable mention in your edition of Jerome,' and to his hostility to Erasmus in a letter

he wrote his good friend at the end of October 1516.[73] More's reference to this annotation in volume IV is the earliest allusion we have from a reader to anything specific in the new edition and is evidence that it was already being attentively perused in England.

The remaining five volumes of the edition were under the care of the Amerbach brothers. Erasmus collaborated with them, and the Amerbachs speak of his assistance and their reliance on his judgment, as does Beatus Rhenanus in his life of Erasmus.[74] The five volumes themselves contain Jerome's scriptural commentaries and closely related works. Commentaries on the major prophets – Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel – are in volume V, commentaries on the minor prophets in volume VI, commentaries on Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Job in volume VII. Erasmus in *censurae* in one of his indexes lists the commentaries on Proverbs and Job, as well as the translation of four homilies on the Song of Songs attributed to Origen that are also in volume VII, as not being Jerome's and briefly discusses their authorship.[75] He suggests that the two commentaries may be works or collections of Bede. Volume VIII contains Jerome's commentaries on the Psalms and has as an appendix a *Quadruplex Psalterium*. The latter is a trilingual psalter with the text of the Psalms in four parallel columns, two per facing page: Septuagint Greek, Latin Vulgate, Jerome's translation of the Hebrew text, and Hebrew. It is an impressive volume, and the copy we have primarily consulted at St Joseph's Seminary in Yonkers has been extensively used and annotated. The last volume in the edition, volume IX, has Jerome's commentaries on Matthew and on St Paul's Epistles to the Galatians, the Ephesians, Titus, and Philemon, and his translation of *De Spiritu Sancto* of Didymus. Other works in the volume, so Erasmus declares,[76] are not Jerome's. These include commentaries on Mark and an extensive series on St Paul's Epistles which are the work of the early heretic Pelagius.[77] At the end of the final volume is a colophon which states that the edition was made at the expense of Bruno, Basilius, and Bonifacius Amerbach, the printer Johann Froben, and Jacob Rechberger, citizens of Basel. Rechberger was the Amerbachs' brother-in-law.

A revised edition in nine folio volumes was published by Johann Froben in 1524–6.[78] Its general title-page informs us that the massive work 'has been emended more carefully than before by Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam' and that the annotations have been enriched. Some alterations and deletions in the latter have also been made. The major change that occurred in the new edition, however, is that the spurious writings attributed to Jerome and other materials that constituted volume II in the 1516 edition have become volume IV in the revised edition. Volumes I, II, and III of the new edition then contain the genuine works of Jerome and

follow the order of contents of volumes I, III, and IV of the earlier edition. The first three volumes of the new edition were published in the summer of 1524. There is a name and topic index compiled by Conradus Pellicanus at the end of volume III. We have chosen to include here the prefatory letter addressed to Archbishop Warham by Erasmus that opens volume II.[79] This expanded version of the preface to volume III in the 1516 edition, in which Erasmus defends the vehemence of Jerome in his writings against heretics and other opponents, is the most substantial of the later prefaces. Volumes IV–VIII came off the press in 1525, and volume IX was published in February 1526. This last volume contains an extensive index to the entire edition also compiled by Conradus Pellicanus.

A second revised edition was published in 1533–4 by Claude Chevallon in Paris.[80] Chevallon had approached Erasmus several years before (soon after the death of Johann Froben in October 1527) and proposed an edition of St Augustine. Erasmus, however, was already at work on such an edition for the Froben firm in Basel and felt bound to stay with Froben's successors. When that edition appeared in 1529 Chevallon set about revising it with the aid of manuscripts borrowed from the monastery of St Victor in Paris and brought out his own edition of St Augustine, which was substantially Erasmus', in 1531.[81] He now repeated this performance with Jerome. He revised the previous Froben edition with the aid of manuscripts borrowed from St Victor, and Erasmus, who was now residing in Freiburg im Breisgau, cooperated by correcting and revising his annotations in volumes I–IV[82] and writing a new general preface.[83] A vivid dream that Erasmus had in 1529 had spurred him to draw up a list of *corrigenda* for several of his works, including the edition of Jerome,[84] and he now had the opportunity to effect the necessary emendations in this revised edition. The new preface, which he wrote in early 1533, was essentially a tribute to his friend and patron Archbishop Warham, who had died the previous August.

From the start there were many reprints in part and in whole of these editions. Eucherius Hirtzhorn (or Cervicornus), a printer in Cologne, brought out pirated editions of Erasmus' *Life of Jerome* in December 1517 and of three letters of Jerome in early 1518. He was taken to court in Frankfurt for his violation of the exclusive publishing rights Froben had obtained from pope and emperor, so Bruno Amerbach informed Erasmus in a letter in March 1518.[85] Bruno also reported his fear that Jean Petit, a well-known Paris printer and bookseller, was planning to pirate the entire edition.[86] Petit did not do so, but in due course reprints of the volumes containing the letters were published in Lyons (in 1525–6, 1528, and 1535), and Sebastian Gryphius brought out the entire revised edition of 1524–6 there in 1530. And the Froben firm published with minor changes the revised Chevallon

edition in 1536–7, 1553, and 1565. Until well past mid-century Erasmus' work on St Jerome held centre stage.[87] It represents without any doubt one of his most important contributions to the thought and learning of his time.

Central to that contribution are the annotations or *scholia* that Erasmus appended to the letters and writings of Jerome that he edited. They are his commentary, and they 'still remain,' according to Denys Gorce, 'an unequalled mine for the scholar and commentator on Jerome.'[88] Generally they are notes intended to elucidate Jerome and help the reader to appreciate him more intelligently. They explain terms and figures of speech, they identify names and places, they locate scriptural and literary references and allusions, they clarify obscurities, they give variants and discuss corrections in the text. There are some more extended comments, which Erasmus calls *antidoti*, and for the first letter in his edition (and in this volume) – Jerome's letter to Heliodorus on the solitary life –there is a comprehensive rhetorical analysis. Jacques Chomarat in his *Grammaire et rhétorique chez Erasme* has discussed this commentary at some length, using it as an example to bear out his basic theme that above all Erasmus sought to unite eloquence and piety.[89] According to Chomarat, Jerome was his model in this endeavour, Quintilian and the New Testament his 'double inspiration.' Quite often, and particularly in the *antidoti*, the annotations contain characteristically Erasmian remarks on the ways and practices of Christians in his own time that underline the contrast with the example or ideal in the early church. These pointed criticisms, like those elsewhere in Erasmus' writings, were a source of great irritation and complaint among his critics and were responsible, in part at least, for the re-editing and republishing of Jerome's works under Catholic auspices in the latter half of the century.[90]

There are many critical comments in the selection of *scholia* we have chosen for this volume. A few examples will illustrate their pungency and thrust. In an annotation to the second letter in his edition – Jerome's letter to Nepotian on the life of clerics and priests – Erasmus writes:

> It should be noted in this passage that clerics had once been prohibited by imperial law from inheriting property. Finally, since St Jerome throughout this letter wants priests to be poor in material goods but rich in learning and piety he does not fully agree with the general conviction of our day, which holds that the church is strengthened and adorned above all by worldly wealth.[91]

An *antidotus* appended to this letter develops this theme.[92] Erasmus cautions against interpreting Jerome too literally when he appears to demand complete poverty of the clergy. The saint, he tells us, is overstating his case in reaction to increasing worldliness among the clergy. The lesson for us is to examine our own ways and amend our lives:

> Let us establish a way of life that would obviate the necessity of twisting the teachings of Christ to conform with our behaviour and the traditions of men. Rather let us adjust our whole life and our principles to the true and pure model of Christ.

A message frequently conveyed by Erasmus, and one that recalls the well-known dictum of Giles of Viterbo in his opening address at the Fifth Lateran Council: 'Men must be changed by religion, not religion by men.'

In another *antidotus*, one appended to Jerome's letter of advice to the young monk Rusticus, the fourth letter in his edition, Erasmus points up the difference between the freer and less structured religious life in Jerome's time and the highly institutionalized and formalized monastic life of his own day.[93] He speculates that it might be better for the church if there were fewer monasteries and far fewer rules and ceremonials. In a parting shot – the *in cauda venenum* that could especially provoke his critics – he says that the latter 'can make one superstitious but not devout.' *Monachatus non est pietas*! Such 'attacks' on monasticism, of course, were among Erasmus' most constant and controversial themes.[94]

Two other familiar chords are struck in *scholia* attached to Jerome's *Catalogue of Ecclesiastical Writers*. In an annotation to the entry for Irenaeus Erasmus writes, referring to a disagreement provoking schism:

> Jerome has not by chance made note of this since he saw, I think, in his own time some who were too hasty in excommunicating others. And in like fashion we also have lost a great part of the world while we enforce to the letter every ceremony. Christ, however, does not crush the bruised reed or extinguish the smoking flax, and the apostle Paul follows this example when he orders the weak in faith to be received, not rejected, and to be borne with as long as there is any hope of making progress.[95]

Again, commenting on a similar reference in the entry for Theophilus to an argument over the exact day of Easter, Erasmus gives vent to his ardent pacifism:

> We dispute fiercely about trifles of this sort, about contingencies, about the conception of the Blessed Virgin, about the day of Easter. About the most insane wars which for so many years now embroil everything sacred and profane the theologians are silent, the preachers say nothing. And here was the broadest field for straining every sinew. Hence we have this plague of Christendom, this ocean of every evil, this source of barbaric tyranny where Christians are oppressed almost more harshly than any Turks.[96]

Even in the indexes that he prepared as part of his introductory material we occasionally find a censorious remark. To the list of lost works of Jerome Erasmus added this comment: 'He translated Holy Scripture for men of his own language, that is, he turned it into Dalmatian. Yet today it is thought a sin if Scripture is read in the vernacular.'[97] Erasmus lost few opportunities to drive home a point, to express himself sharply, succinctly, and suddenly on issues that were of the utmost importance to him. His annotations, besides elucidating the text of Jerome, enunciate his own most characteristic and controversial views. He raised hackles and made enemies thereby, but his commentary greatly enriched his edition on every score. It made it a uniquely valuable and useful scholarly work and at the same time added to its relevance and impact as a vehicle of humanist reform.

We have emphasized that Erasmus was a reformer and that his scholarly and literary work was an integral and fundamental part of his programme. His chief aim was to reform theology by returning it to its scriptural and patristic sources. This meant replacing the theology of the schools – the 'modern' theology of the Occamists, Scotists, and other dialecticians – with what Erasmus deemed the genuine theology of the early church – the *vetus ac vera theologia*. Everything else would flow from that: the restoration of religion, the reform of the individual Christian, and the amelioration of Christian society. In this return to the sources Holy Scripture came first, of course, especially the Gospels and Epistles, but after this 'literature of Christ' came the early Fathers. Their authority derived from their closeness in time as well as in spirit to the divine source, and their chief value lay in interpreting the sacred text and moving us to fuller understanding and acceptance of it. They were 'a river of gold' compared to the 'modern' theologians, whose 'shallow rivulets ... are neither very pure nor faithful to their source.'[98] Their writings instruct and inspire us in living a Christian life, for theology in Erasmus' view is essentially practical, a guide to life rather than a subject for debate, a matter of transformation rather than of speculation.[99] Let us quote T.S. Eliot on this theme, for these words of his express well, though in a slightly different idiom, Erasmus' own thought on the role of the Fathers and the return to the sources:

> We need to know how to see the world as the Christian Fathers saw it; and the purpose of reascending to origins is that we should be able to return, with greater spiritual knowledge, to our own situation.[100]

Nearly all of Erasmus' career and work can be viewed in the light of this broad goal and perspective, from his first meeting with Colet at Oxford in 1499 to his posthumous edition of Origen in 1536. He had been deeply

impressed, as we have mentioned, by Colet's exegetical approach in his lectures on St Paul and by his efforts at reform. Colet asked him to join in this endeavour to restore 'that ancient true theology,' but aware of his inadequacy Erasmus declined the invitation. He declared, however, that 'as soon as I feel myself to possess the necessary stamina and strength, I shall come personally to join your party, and will give devoted, if not distinguished, service to the defence of theology.'[101] Prophetic words! Erasmus did join Colet's party and gave distinguished as well as devoted service to the common cause.

Why did Jerome occupy a place of such prime importance in Erasmus' plans for reform? There is hardly any mystery about it. As Erasmus tells us over and over again, he believed that Jerome was the greatest of the Latin Fathers and that even Greece could scarcely match him. The saint's erudition, love of letters, knowledge of languages, and superb style elevated him above all the others. He was a model of what the theologian ought to be. 'Who had a more thorough knowledge of the philosophy of Christ? Who expressed it more forcefully in his writings or in his life? Are these, I ask you, the hallmarks of a theologian or not?' Erasmus asks at a climactic point in his *Life of Jerome*.[102] The restoration of Jerome in his eyes was synonymous with the restoration of theology itself. There are, of course, further reasons why Erasmus had so marked a predilection for Jerome. Already in the letter he wrote as a young canon at Steyn saying he had read and copied all of Jerome's letters it is clear that Erasmus admired their literary elegance. They were decisive proof that there need not be a divorce between religion and culture. Jerome in fact embodied their union and could serve therefore as an exemplar for a young Erasmus already captivated by that revival of classical letters which is the essence of Renaissance humanism. The saint's eloquence, his 'stylistic power,' which, so Erasmus tells us, rivalled and in some respects even surpassed Cicero's, pointed the way to that renewal of theology which soon became Erasmus' primary goal. He sought above all, as Chomarat has pointed out, to unite eloquence and piety, to forge what has been called, in the best sense, a 'rhetorical theology.' Here again Jerome was the model and ideal.

Intimately connected with Jerome's literary excellence and his eloquence was his classical learning. His knowledge of Greek gave him, in Erasmus' estimation, a distinct advantage over Augustine. Jerome's formidable erudition combined with his stylistic skill commended him naturally to the humanist, but more important was the bearing of all this on his work as a theologian and its contribution to his scriptural studies. His training in rhetoric enabled him to endow theology with 'dignity of style.'[103] His classical learning gave rich cultural context to his writing. His knowledge of

languages, which included not only Latin and Greek but also Hebrew and Chaldee, made it possible for him to work with all the original texts of Holy Scripture. 'What Roman eloquence, what mastery of the tongues, what a range of knowledge in all antiquity and all history!' Erasmus exclaimed in a letter to Pope Leo X.[104] This 'mastery of the tongues' certainly was one of the most important attractions of Jerome for Erasmus. Return to the sources and careful study of the ancient texts in their original languages are the distinguishing marks of the humanist scholar. That Jerome did this so extensively with Holy Scripture gave Erasmus precedent and justification for his own work on the New Testament and established perhaps the closest bond between himself and Jerome. This approach to the study of Scripture and its exegesis has been called grammatical or philological, the emphasis being on the language of the sacred text and on the use and meaning of its words in their original context.[105] As a theological method it stood in sharp contrast to the scholastic method and was a subject of great controversy between Erasmus and his critics, but it joined him with Jerome in a single endeavour.[106] If the prince of humanists sought to replace scholasticism with a 'rhetorical theology,' he strove also for one that would be basically and thoroughly 'grammatical' as well.[107]

Erasmus' singular preference for Jerome has often been contrasted with his attitude toward Augustine, whose influence throughout the Middle Ages was so pervasive. In his *Life of Jerome* Erasmus, discussing the correspondence that took place between the two saints, remarked that Augustine was superior to Jerome only in his episcopal dignity and that he was Jerome's inferior in all other respects (a sentence he omitted when he revised his edition of the letters in 1524).[108] He also took issue in the *Life* with the Italian humanist Francesco Filelfo, who had once said that Augustine was superior in dialectics but that Jerome surpassed him in eloquence. 'It is not my purpose to diminish in any way the attainments of Augustine,' Erasmus wrote, 'but the facts themselves proclaim that Jerome surpassed Augustine in dialectics no less than he outstripped him in eloquence and that he was no less Augustine's superior in learning than he was in excellence of style.'[109] Johann Eck, Luther's famous opponent, in a letter to Erasmus a few years later declared that he agreed with the judgment of Filelfo and bemoaned the fact that Erasmus was critical of Augustine and had disparaged him in one of his annotations on the New Testament.[110] He accused Erasmus of having failed to read Augustine. Erasmus replied at length, defending his preference for Jerome.[111] He ridiculed the notion that he had not read Augustine. He 'was the author I read first of them all,' he declared, '... And the more I read him, the more I feel satisfied with my estimate of the two of them.' He urged Eck 'to read Jerome with more

attention, and you will vote for my side.' He then launched into a comparison of Jerome with Augustine, rehearsing Jerome's advantages at every point: his birthplace, education, early Christian upbringing, and long years devoted to the study of Holy Scripture. He especially stressed that Jerome knew Greek. 'All philosophy and all theology in those days belonged to the Greeks,' Erasmus declared, yet 'Augustine knew no Greek.' This deficiency obviously was of decisive importance for the great humanist.

It is interesting to note, parenthetically at least, that Luther shared the view of his arch-opponent Johann Eck concerning the superiority of St Augustine and disagreed sharply with Erasmus on this matter. He wrote in March 1517:

> I see that not everyone is a truly wise Christian just because he knows Greek and Hebrew. St Jerome with his five languages cannot be compared with Augustine, who knew only one language. Erasmus, however, is of an absolutely different opinion on this. But the discernment of one who attributes weight to man's will is different from that of him who knows nothing else but grace.[112]

Luther's disagreement with Erasmus, as he indicates, went far deeper than this difference of opinion over Jerome. It had profound theological roots, and these lie at the source not only of Luther's dispute with Erasmus but of the whole Reformation controversy as well.[113] In fact Luther's preference for Augustine and disparagement of Jerome also flow from this doctrinal source. The Wittenberg reformer saw Augustine (but not Jerome) as in agreement with his own basic concept of justification by faith alone. This perception is borne out strikingly in a letter Georgius Spalatinus, secretary to Duke Frederick of Saxony, wrote to Erasmus in December 1516.[114] Spalatinus wrote as an intermediary at the behest of his friend Luther to explain that Luther believed Erasmus in error in his understanding of St Paul on the matter of justification. 'He thinks therefore,' continued Spalatinus, 'that you should read Augustine in his treatises against the Pelagians, especially the *De spiritu et littera* ... and then you will not only understand the Apostle correctly but also pay much greater reverence to St Augustine.'[115] This Eck-like sentiment about reading and reverencing Augustine, which Spalatinus conveyed on Luther's behalf, is accompanied in the secretary's letter by words of praise and high esteem for Erasmus' many works. 'My prince, Duke Frederick,' Spalatinus writes, 'has in his ducal library every book of yours that I have been able to find, and intends to buy any others that you may hereafter publish anywhere in the world. He has

lately seen with admiration the works of St Jerome so well restored in your edition that before you corrected them anyone might have supposed we possessed any author's works rather than Jerome's.'[116]

These last remarks are a suitable note on which to conclude. They return our attention to the great edition of Jerome, and they are further testimony to the acclaim and gratitude with which it was received.

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THE EDITION OF ST JEROME

Erasmus' dedicatory letter to Archbishop William Warham of Canterbury, primate of England and lord chancellor of the realm, serves as the general preface to the edition of Jerome. Warham (1456?–1532) had been archbishop of Canterbury since 1503 and lord chancellor since 1504, although Cardinal Wolsey had succeeded him in the latter office at the end of 1515, a change Erasmus apparently was unaware of when he wrote this dedication. Erasmus first met him during his second visit to England in 1505, and he dedicated to him at that time his translation of Euripides' *Hecuba* (Ep 188) and subsequently his translation of Euripides' *Iphigenia* (Ep 208). Warham remained a warm friend and a generous patron. In 1512 he granted Erasmus a yearly pension from a parochial benefice at Aldington in Kent (See Allen Ep 255 introduction). The dedication is a mark of Erasmus' high regard for and gratitude to the English prelate. He had originally thought of offering the edition to Pope Leo X, but more appropriately he dedicated the Greek and Latin New Testament, which appeared earlier that year, to the Roman pontiff. These two remarkable works, which are so closely related, thus appeared under the protection and auspices of men of the highest authority.

We have discussed this dedication in our introduction. Suffice it to say here that Erasmus presents a justification for his edition of Jerome as well as a panegyric of the saint's superior qualities as a Christian scholar and author. He also recounts the story of his long and difficult labours in editing and restoring the text of Jerome's works and briefly describes the first four volumes of the edition, which he had taken as his special province. The letter is an apt and informative introduction to the great work that follows.

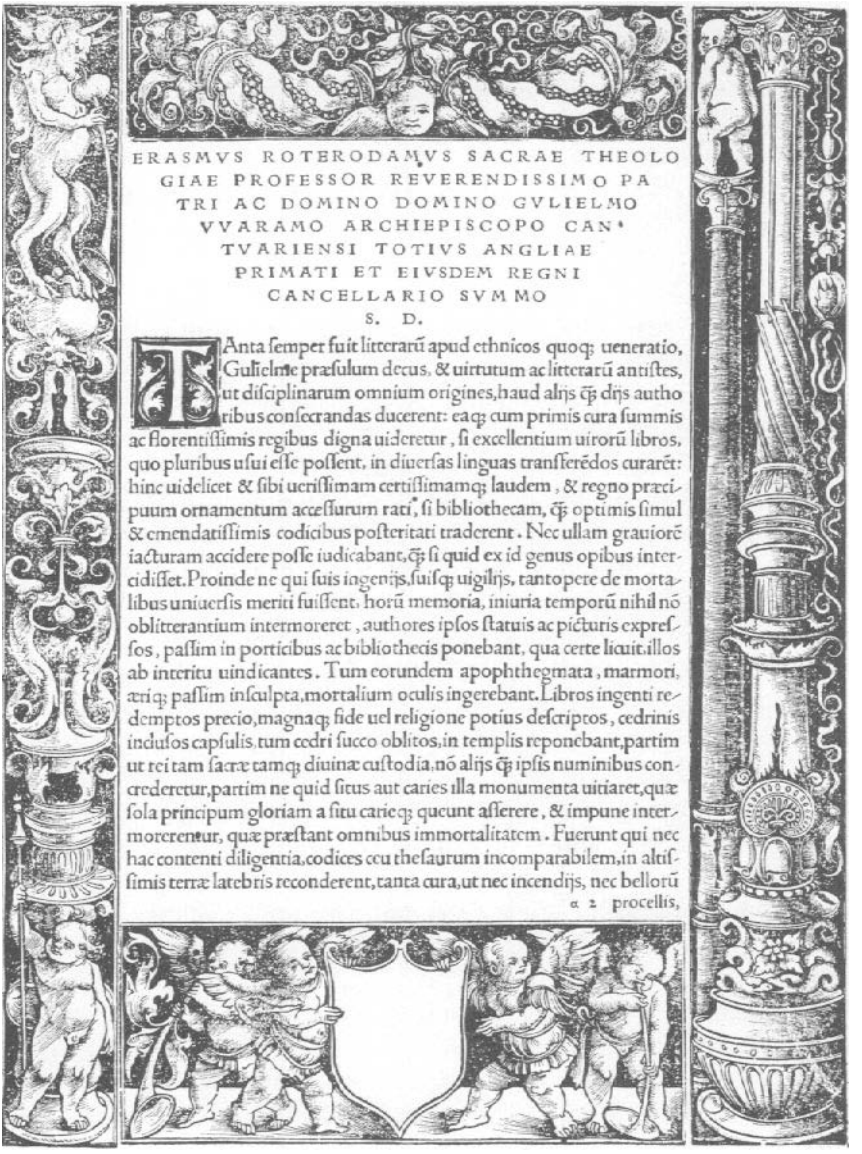
The dedicatory letter is Ep 396 in Allen and CWE.

DEDICATORY LETTER

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, DOCTOR OF DIVINITY,
TO THE MOST REVEREND FATHER AND LORD, WILLIAM WARHAM,
ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY, PRIMATE OF ALL ENGLAND
AND LORD HIGH CHANCELLOR OF THE SAID REALM,
GREETING

So great was the veneration always accorded to literature even by pagans, William, paragon of prelates and champion of the virtues and of sound learning, that they supposed the origins of all the liberal arts should be ascribed to the gods alone as their inventors, and the most powerful and prosperous monarchs thought no concern more becoming to them than to arrange for the translation of works of outstanding authors into various tongues, that more men might enjoy them. This was, they thought, the way to secure the truest and most lasting renown for themselves and a special ornament for their kingdoms, if they bequeathed to posterity a library equipped with most accurate copies of the very best authors; nor did they think a more serious loss could befall them than the destruction of any of their riches in this kind. They were concerned therefore that the memory of those whose gifted natures and whose exertions had done so much for the whole human race should never succumb to the attacks of time that effaces all things; and so they placed statues and pictures of the authors themselves everywhere in cloister and library, to protect them from oblivion at least as far as in them lay. Further, they had the maxims of great authors inscribed everywhere in marble or bronze and set them up for all men to see; they bought their works at vast expense and had them faithfully and almost religiously copied, enclosed them in chests of cedar wood and rubbed them with cedar oil, then laid them up in their temples. For this there were two reasons: something so sacred, so divine, should not be entrusted for safekeeping to any but the gods themselves, and no neglect or decay must be allowed to spoil the only monuments which can keep neglect and decay from the glory of princes, nor should works be allowed to die defenceless which confer immortality on all men.

For some even this degree of care was not enough, and they laid up their books like some incomparable treasure in storehouses deep under ground, intending by these precautions to protect them from destruction by fire or by the storms of war, which so often confound everything sacred and profane, that they might survive at least for the benefit of posterity. They



ERASMVS ROTERODAMVS SACRAE THEOLO
GIAE PROFESSOR REVERENDISSIMO PA
TRI AC DOMINO DOMINO GVLIELMO
VVARAMO ARCHIEPISCOPO CAN*
TVARIENSI TOTIVS ANGLIAE
PRIMATI ET EIVSDEM REGNI
CANCELLARIO SVMMO
S. D.

TAnta ſemper fuit litterarũ apud ethnicos quoq; uenera-
tio, Gulielme præſulum decus, & uirtutum ac litterarũ antiſtes,
ut diſciplinarum omnium origines, haud alijs q̃ dijs autho
ribus conſecrandas ducerent: eaq; cum primis cura ſummis
ac florentiſſimis regibus digna uideretur, ſi excellentium uirorũ libros,
quo pluribus uſui eſſe poſſent, in diuerſas linguas tranſferẽdos curarẽt:
hinc uidelicet & ſibi ueriſſimam certiſſimamq; laudem, & regno præci-
puum ornamentum acceſſurum rati, ſi bibliothecam, q̃ optimis ſimul
& emendatiſſimis codicibus poſteritati traderent. Nec ullam grauiorẽ
iacturam accidere poſſe iudicabant, q̃ ſi quid ex id genus opibus inter-
cidiſſet. Proinde ne qui ſuis ingenijs, ſuiſq; uigilijs, tantopere de morta-
libus uniuerſis meriti fuiſſent, horũ memoria, iniuria temporũ nihil nõ
oblitterantium intermoreret, authores ipſos ſtatuis ac picturis expreſ-
ſos, paſſim in porticibus ac bibliothecis ponebant, qua certe licuit illos
ab interitu uindicantes. Tum eorundem apophthegmata, marmori,
æriq; paſſim inſculpta, mortalium oculis ingerebant. Libros ingenti re-
demptos precio, magnaq; fide uel religione potius deſcriptos, cedrinis
induſos capſulis, tum cedri ſucco oblitos, in templis reponebant, partim
ut rei tam ſacræ tamq; diuinæ cuſtodia, nõ alijs q̃ ipſis numinibus con-
crederetur, partim ne quid ſitus aut caries illa monumenta uitiaret, quæ
ſola principum gloriam a ſitu carieq; queunt aſſerere, & impune inter-
morerentur, quæ præſtant omnibus immortalitatem. Fuerunt qui nec
hac contenti diligentia, codices ceu theſaurum incomparabilem, in altiſ-
ſimis terræ latebris reconderent, tanta cura, ut nec incendijs, nec bellorũ

Dedicatory letter, Erasmus to William Warham, Ep 396
Hieronymi opera I (Basel: Froben 1516)
Öffentliche Bibliothek, University of Basel

perceived of course, those princes distinguished no less for wisdom than for royal state, that it was barbarous for the corpses of the dead to be so carefully embalmed sometimes with unguents and spices and woad to preserve them from decay, when their preservation served no purpose since they could no longer reproduce the features or figure of the deceased, which even a statue of stone can do, and to take no such care to preserve the relics of the mind. And so they thought it far more appropriate to transfer that solicitude to the books of great men, in which they live on for the world at large even after death, and live on in such fashion that they speak to more people and more effectively dead than alive. They converse with us, instruct us, tell us what to do and what not to do, give us advice and encouragement and consolation as loyally and as readily as anyone can. In fact, they then most truly come alive for us when they themselves have ceased to live. For such is my opinion: if a man had lived in familiar converse with Cicero (to take him as an example) for several years, he will know less of Cicero than they do who by constant reading of what he wrote converse with his spirit every day.

Now if such honour was paid even to works of superstition like the books of Numa and the Sibyl,[1] or to volumes of human history as was customary in Egypt, or to those that enshrined some part of human wisdom such as the works of Plato and Aristotle, how much more appropriate that Christian princes and bishops should do likewise by preserving the writings of men inspired by the Holy Spirit, who have left us not so much books as sacred oracles! And yet somehow it happened that in that field our ancestors did singularly little. We may not think much, I grant you, of the loss of pagan authors, the only result of which is that we are less well informed or less eloquent, but not less virtuous. But think of the admirable and really saintly authors bequeathed to us by Greece, that seat of learning, or its rival Italy, by Gaul, once such a flourishing home of culture, or Africa with all its originality, or Spain with its tradition of hard work. How impressive was their recondite learning, how brilliant their eloquence, how holy their lives! And yet, I ask you, how few of them survive, preserved more by accident than by any help from us! And those survivors, how foully mutilated, how badly adulterated, how full throughout of monstrous errors, so that to survive in that condition was no great privilege! For my part, far as I am from despising the simple piety of common folk, I cannot but wonder at the absurd judgment of the multitude. The slippers of the saints and their drivel-stained napkins we put to our lips, and the books they wrote, the most sacred and most powerful relics of those holy men, we leave to lie neglected. A scrap of a saint's tunic or shirt we place in a gilded and bejewelled reliquary, and the books into which they put so much work, and

in which we have the best part of them still living and breathing, we abandon to be gnawed at will by bug, worm, and cockroach.

Nor is it hard to guess the reason for this. Once the character of princes had quite degenerated into a barbaric form of tyranny, and bishops had begun to love their lay lordships more than the duty of teaching bequeathed to them by the apostles, the whole business of instruction was soon abandoned to a certain class, who today claim charity and religion as their private trademark; sound learning began to be neglected, and a knowledge of Greek, still more of Hebrew, was looked down on; to study the art of expression was despised, and Latin itself so much contaminated with an ever-changing barbarism that Latin by now was the last thing it resembled. History, geography, antiquities, all were dropped. Literature was reduced to a few sophistic niceties, and the sum of human learning began to be found only in certain summary compilers and makers of excerpts, whose impudence stood in inverse proportion to their knowledge. And so they easily allowed those old classic authors to fall out of use or, what is more like the truth, they deliberately contrived their disappearance, for they now read them in vain, lacking all things necessary for their understanding. They did, however, make a few haphazard extracts from them which they mingled with their own notes; and this made it even more in their interest that the old authors should disappear, to save them from the charge of plagiarism or ignorance. It was worth their while for Clement, Irenaeus, Polycarp, Origen, Arnobius to fall out of use, that in their stead the world might read Occam, Durandus, Capreolus, Lyra, Burgensis,[2] and even poorer stuff than that. So under their long and despotic rule such was the holocaust of humane literature and good authors that a man who had meddled even slightly with sound learning was expelled from the ranks of the doctors.

The result of this was the total loss of so many luminaries of the world, whose names alone survive and cannot be read without tears; and if by some chance any have escaped destruction, they are damaged in so many ways and so much mutilated and adulterated that those who perished outright might seem fortunate. Now this seems to me a perfectly monstrous fate for all learned authors, but far more monstrous in Jerome than anywhere else, whose many outstanding gifts deserved that he, even if no one else, should be preserved complete and uncorrupted. Other authors have each a different claim upon us; Jerome alone possesses, united in one package, as the phrase goes, and to a remarkable degree, all the gifts that we admire separately in others. Distinction in one department is a great and rare achievement; but he combined overall excellence with being easily first in everything separately, if you compare him with other authors, while if you compare him with himself, nothing stands out, such is his balanced

mingling of all the supreme qualities. If you assay his mental endowments, where else would you find such an enthusiastic student, such a keen critic, such prolific originality? What could be more ingenious or diverting, if the subject should call for something entertaining? If however you are looking for brilliance of expression, on that side at least Jerome leaves all Christian authors so far behind him that one cannot compare with him even those who spent their whole time on nothing but the art of writing; and so impossible is it to find any writer of our faith to compare with him that in my opinion Cicero himself, by universal consent the leading light of Roman eloquence, is surpassed by him in some of the qualities of a good style, as I shall show at greater length in his life. For my part, I have the same experience with Jerome that I used to have with Cicero: if I compare him with any other author, however brilliant, that man suddenly seems as it were to lose his voice, and he whose language has no rival in my admiration, when set alongside Jerome for comparison, seems to become tongue-tied and stammers. If you demand learning, I ask you, whom can Greece produce with all her erudition, so perfect in every department of knowledge, that he might be matched against Jerome? Who ever so successfully united every part of the sum of knowledge in such perfection? Was there ever an individual expert in so many languages? Who ever achieved such familiarity with history, geography, and antiquities? Who ever became so equally and completely at home in all literature, both sacred and profane? If you look to his memory, never was there an author, ancient or modern, who was not at his immediate disposal. Was there a corner of Holy Scripture or anything so recondite or diverse that he could not produce it, as it were, cash down? As for his industry, who ever either read or wrote so many volumes? Who had the whole of Scripture by heart, as he had, drinking it in, digesting it, turning it over and over, pondering upon it? Who expended so much effort in every branch of learning? And if you contemplate his lofty character, who breathes the spirit of Christ more vividly? Who has taught him with more enthusiasm? Who ever followed him more exactly in his way of life? This man, single-handed, could represent the Latin world, either for holiness of life or for mastery of theology, if only he survived complete and undamaged.

As it is, I doubt whether any author has had more outrageous treatment. A good part of all he wrote has perished. What survives was not so much corrupted as virtually destroyed and defaced, and this partly by the fault of illiterate scribes whose habit it is to copy an accurate text inaccurately and make a faulty text worse, to leave out what they cannot read and to corrupt what they do not understand – for instance, the Hebrew and Greek words which Jerome often brings in; but in a much more criminal fashion by

sacrilegious men, I know not whom, who have deliberately cut down very many passages, added some, altered many, corrupted, adulterated, and muddled almost everything, so that there is hardly a paragraph which an educated man can read without stumbling. What is more (and this is the most pestilential way of ruining a text), as though it were not enough to have put together so many idiotic blunders, showing equally ignorance and inability to write, under the name of one who is equally a great scholar and a great stylist, they have mixed in their own rubbish into his expositions in such a way that no one can separate them. Ascribe a book to the wrong author, and there are many indications that this is wrong; but if scraps are intermingled, like darnel in wheat, where is the sieve that can screen them out? That all this has happened I shall shortly demonstrate in the catalogue of Jerome's works, and in the two prefaces and critical introductions of the second volume.[3]

I was roused therefore, partly by this insufferable ill-treatment of so eminent a Doctor of the church, on whose immortal works these worse than Calydonian boars[4] have wreaked their fury unpunished, and partly by thoughts of the general advantage of all who wish to learn, whom I saw debarred by these outrages from enjoying such a feast – I was roused, I say, to restore to the best of my ability the volumes of his letters, which were the richest in learning and eloquence and proportionately the worst corrupted, although I well knew how difficult and arduous was the task I took in hand. To begin with, the labour of comparing together so many volumes is very tedious, as they know who have experience of working in this treadmill. Often too I had to work with volumes which it was no easy business to read, the forms of the script being either obscured by decay and neglect, or half eaten away and mutilated by worm and beetle, or written in the fashion of Goths or Lombards, so that even to learn the letter-forms I had to go back to school; not to mention for the moment that the actual task of detecting, of smelling out as it were, anything that does not sound like a true and genuine reading requires a man in my opinion who is well informed, quick-witted, and alert. But on top of this far the most difficult thing is either to conjecture from corruptions of different kinds what the author wrote, or to guess the original reading on the basis of such fragments and vestiges of the shapes of the script as may survive. And further, while this is always extremely difficult, it is outstandingly so in the works of Jerome. There are several reasons for this. One is that his actual style is far from ordinary, starred with epigrams, highlighted with exclamations, rich in devious and cunning artifice, in pressing close-packed argument, in humorous allusions, sometimes seeming to use all the tricks of the rhetorical schools without restraint, and everywhere exhibiting the highly skilled craftsman. As a result, the

further his style is from the understanding of ordinary people, the more blunders it is defiled with. One man copies not what he reads but what he thinks he understands; another supposes everything he does not understand to be corrupt, and changes the text as he thinks best, following no guide but his own imagination; a third detects perhaps that the text is corrupt, but while trying to emend it with an unambitious conjecture he introduces two mistakes in place of one, and while trying to cure a slight wound inflicts one that is incurable.

Besides all this, there is the astonishing way in which Jerome mixes material of the most varied kinds. He even went out of his way to do this, but with complete success. It was a kind of ambition and ostentation, if you like, but of a pious and holy kind: to display his own resources with the object of shocking us out of our lethargy and awaking his drowsy readers to study the inner meaning of the Scriptures. There is no class of author anywhere and no kind of literature which he does not use whenever he likes – sprinkling here and there, pressing harder, ramming it home: Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Chaldaean, sacred and profane, old and new, everything! Like a bee that flies from flower to flower, he collected the best of everything to make the honey stored in his works;[5] he plucked different blossoms from every quarter to adorn his chaplet; he put together his mosaic out of tesserae of every colour. And of all these it was the most recondite materials that he habitually wove in with the greatest readiness. There is nothing so obscure in the meaning-within-meaning of the Prophets, in the hidden senses of the whole Old Testament, in the Gospels or the Epistles, that he does not use as though it were familiar, sometimes with such a sidelong glance that only a well-instructed and attentive reader will catch the allusion. What is there in the literature of the Hebrews or Chaldaeans, in rhetorical or geographical textbooks, in poetry and medicine and philosophy, and even in books written by heretics, from which he does not draw thread to weave into his book? To understand all this, encyclopaedic learning is essential, even if the texts were faultless; and what happens, do you suppose, when everything is so damaged, so mutilated, so muddled that, if Jerome himself came to life again, he would neither recognize his own work nor understand it?

And then there was a further handicap. The greatest part of the authors upon whom Jerome drew as his sources have perished, and with their support it might have been possible to repair somehow the results of repeated damage or even loss: for this is, as it were, the sheet-anchor in which scholars normally take refuge in their greatest difficulties. For since I did not undertake this labour to secure either reputation or reward, I at least was not so much moved by something that might perhaps have deterred another man from setting his hand to any business of the kind. What is that?

you will ask. I mean this: no other work brings a man more tedium and weariness, and equally no work brings its author less repute or gratitude, because, while the whole advantage of one's exertions is enjoyed by one's reader, he fails to appreciate not only how hard one has worked for his benefit but even how much he has gained, unless someone by chance were to compare my work with the texts in current use. The reader wanders at leisure over smiling fields; he plays and runs and never stumbles; and he never gives a thought to the time and tedium it has cost me to battle with the thorns and briars, while I was clearing that land for his benefit. He does not reckon how long a single brief word may sometimes have tormented the man trying to correct it, nor does he bring to mind how much I suffered in my efforts to remove anything that might hold him up, how great the discomforts that secured his comfort, how much tedium was the price of his finding nothing tedious.

But I shall be tedious myself if I recount all the tedium I have endured in this affair; so let me say just one thing, which is bold, but true. I believe that the writing of his books cost Jerome less effort than I spent in the restoring of them, and their birth meant fewer nightly vigils for him than their rebirth for me. The rest any man may conjecture for himself. Why need I mention here the ingratitude and ignorance of some men I could name, who would rather have no changes whatever in the text of the best authors? They do nothing themselves, and object noisily to the distinguished efforts of others; men whose judgment is so crass that they find errors in what is perfectly preserved and stylish elegance in the foulest corruptions, and (what is worse) of such perversity that, while they do not grant scholars the right to correct a faulty text by hard work, they allow some worthless fellow to befoul and stultify and ruin the works of the greatest authors at his own sweet will without a protest. And so it is inevitable that one should earn no gratitude from the majority and win the resentment of this last class of men even for the service one has done them. You may say that profit means nothing to the noble soul, and that honour and glory are easily despised by the good Christian. Yes: but even men of the highest character look for gratitude if they have deserved it. Who can tolerate scandal and abuse in return for doing good?

Of all this I was well aware; but I was moved by a great desire to rescue Jerome, by the thought of being useful to those who have the Scriptures at heart, and last but not least because your Highness approved and would have it so, and you above all others gave me the impulse and unflagging encouragement to undertake this. And so I despised all the difficulties, and like a modern Hercules I set out on my most laborious but most glorious campaign, taking the field almost unaided against all the monsters of error. I

cannot think that Hercules consumed as much energy in taming a few monsters as I did in abolishing so many thousand blunders. And I conceive that not a little more advantage will accrue to the world from my work than from his labours which are on the lips of all men. To start with, by comparing many copies, early copies especially, and sometimes adding my conjectures as the traces of the script suggested, I have removed the blunders and restored the correct reading. The Greek words, which had been either omitted or wrongly supplied, I have replaced. I have done the same with the Hebrew also; but in this department what I was less able to manage for myself I have achieved with the assistance of others, and especially of the brothers Amerbach, Bruno, Basilius, and Bonifacius, whom their excellent father Johannes Amerbach equipped with the three tongues as though they were born expressly for the revival of ancient texts. And in this they have even outstripped their father's wishes and expectations, thinking nothing more important than the glory of Jerome and for his sake sparing neither expense nor health. For my part I was very grateful for their help, having only dipped into Hebrew rather than learnt it. And yet I saw to it that the keen reader should find nothing lacking even if I lacked it myself, and what fell short in my own capacity has been fully supplied out of the resources of others. Why should I be ashamed to do in the defence of such an author what the greatest monarchs do without shame in the recovery, and even the destruction, of paltry towns?

I have added a summary to each treatise or letter, opening the door, as it were, to those who wish to enter. And then, since not everyone is blessed with such wide linguistic and literary knowledge, I have thrown light on anything that might hold up a reader of modest attainments by adding notes, hoping to achieve a double purpose: first, to make such an eminent author, who hitherto could not be read even by men of great learning, accessible to those whose learning is but small, and second, that it may not be so easy in future for anyone to corrupt what other men have restored. Not content with this, the pieces wrongly circulating under Jerome's name, many of them such that their author is clearly not Jerome but some botcher as witless as he is impudent, I have not cut out, in order that a reader whose appetite is greater than his taste might run no risk of disappointment (to put it more bluntly, so that every donkey may find its thistle[6]), but exiled to a suitable place, although in themselves they deserve no place at all. Next, I divided the whole corpus (I speak of the section which I took for my own province) into four volumes. In the first I have grouped together his pieces of moral instruction by exhortation and example, because what deals with the ordering of life deserves attention first. The second I have divided into three classes, into the first of which I have put certain things that show some

degree of culture and are worth reading, but are falsely ascribed to Jerome; into the next, things which are not his, but carry an author's name in their headings; the third class is a kind of cesspool into which I have thrown the supremely worthless rubbish of some impostor, I know not whom, of whom it may fairly be doubted which is the greater, his inability to write, his ignorance, or his impudence. At least, whoever he was, he seems to me to deserve public execration for the rest of time; and he must have had a very low opinion of the intelligence of posterity if he hoped that there would never be anyone who could distinguish the ravings of a half-witted noisy fellow from the works of a man of the highest eloquence, learning, and sanctity. The third volume I have allotted to his works of controversy and apologetics, those, that is, which are devoted to refuting the errors of heretics and the calumnies of his opponents. The fourth I have kept for the expository works, I mean the explanations of Holy Scripture.

With something of the same zealous intentions I have lately produced a New Covenant equipped with my annotations, and I decided that the dedication of that work should be shared by Leo the supreme pontiff and your Highness, that my new undertaking might come before the public protected and recommended by the names of the whole world's two greatest men. But Jerome, recalled to the light from some sort of nether region, I prefer to dedicate to you alone, either because I owe you without exception everything I have, or because you always have a special concern for Jerome's reputation, perceiving with your usual wisdom that after the writings of the evangelists and apostles there is nothing more deserving of a Christian's attention. For my part I would gladly believe that Jerome himself takes some pleasure in the thought that his restoration to life in the world has the authority of your most favourable name, for he is no more the greatest of theologians than you are second to none among bishops whom all admire. He mastered to such good effect the whole cycle of knowledge in its completeness, and you likewise have blended in a wonderful harmony the full circle of a bishop's virtues.

In all other respects the agreement is admirable. I have one anxiety, that my limited powers may fail to do justice to Jerome's importance or to your eminent position; for nowhere do I feel more clearly how small my talent is than when I am striving to make some sort of response to your exalted virtues and your unbounded goodness to me. But what was I to do, bound to you as I am by so many and such great obligations that if I sold myself into slavery I should not be in a position to repay any part of my debt? I have done what bankrupts often do, making a token payment to bind themselves yet more irrecoverably, and thus proving that it is the means and not the will they lack; they are ill-starred rather than dishonest debtors, and

for this very reason often secure the good will of a jury, because they are not so much ungrateful as unfortunate. In such cases the only means of showing gratitude is to be a frank and cheerful debtor, and to acknowledge one's debt is the first step towards paying it. Or rather, to compare a situation even more like mine, I have followed the example of those who would rather raise a fresh loan than go to prison for nonpayment, and have borrowed from Jerome the wherewithal to repay you. Though why should it any longer look like something borrowed rather than my own? – real estate often passes from one ownership to another by occupation or prescriptive right. In any case, in this line of business Jerome himself has laid down a principle for me in his preface to the books of Kings, repeatedly calling that work his, because anything that we have made our own by correcting, reading, constant devotion, we can fairly claim is ours.[7] On this principle why should not I myself claim a proprietary right in the works of Jerome? For centuries they had been treated as abandoned goods; I entered upon them as something ownerless, and by incalculable efforts reclaimed them for all devotees of the true theology.

It is a river of gold, a well-stocked library, that a man acquires who possesses Jerome and nothing else. He does not possess him, on the other hand, if his text is like what used to be in circulation, all confusion and impurity. Not that I would dare assert that none of the old corruptions, no traces of his previous ruined state, remain; I doubt if Jerome himself could achieve that without the aid of better manuscripts than I have yet had the chance to use. But this with all my zeal I have achieved, that not many now remain. And if I have done nothing else, at least my attempt will spur on some other men not to accept hereafter indiscriminately whatever they may find in their books, however badly corrupted by one impostor after another or masquerading under some false title, and read it and approve it and cite it as an oracle. I only wish that all good scholars would devote all their forces to the task of restoring as far as possible to its original purity whatever in the way of good authors has somehow survived after such numerous shipwrecks! But I should not like to see anyone enter this field who is not as well equipped with honesty, accuracy, judgment, and readiness to take pains as he is with erudition; for there is no more cruel enemy of good literature than the man who sets out to correct it half-instructed, half-asleep, hasty, and of unsound judgment.

If only all princes were of the same mind as you – if they would let go these wars with all their madness and their misery, and devote themselves to the task of adorning their generation with the arts of peace, firing the zeal of learned men to these most salutary labours by suitable rewards! Very soon we should see all the world over what has come to pass in these few

years in your native England. For many years she has been strong in manhood and in wealth; and lately she has become so well endowed, has achieved such distinction, and so blossomed forth in religion, justice, gracious living, and last but not least in all the study of the classics (and all this your doing!), that this remote island can serve as a spur even to the most civilized regions in their pursuit of the highest things.

Farewell in Christ Jesus, most illustrious prelate, and may he preserve you in health and wealth as long as possible for the increase of religion and the advancement of humane studies.

Basel, 1 April 1516

LIFE OF JEROME

Hieronymi Stridonensis vita

Erasmus' *Life of Jerome* is the first critical biography of the saint, and as an extended historical work it stands alone among Erasmus' writings. Erasmus was not a historian, but in this instance he wrote history and wrote it well.[1] As an introduction to the edition of Jerome the *Life* shares in the purpose of that undertaking as well as in Erasmus' broader goals for reform. It also bears a particularly personal stamp because of Erasmus' devotion and scholarly attachment to Jerome. The work thus has dimensions other than the purely historical and displays a distinctly rhetorical character, wherein purpose and style as well as scholarship and historical accuracy are dominant features.

We called attention to the historical method and authenticity of the *Life* in our introduction. Here let us say a few words about its rhetorical character. This is most clearly manifest in its general structure. The life is a combination of panegyric and forensic rhetorical composition. It was written both in praise of Jerome and in his defence. The two rhetorical modes overlap, indeed intertwine, but there is no mistaking their distinctive – and complementary – presence. The narration is full of praise, and Jerome is held up as an example and ideal. By the same token opponents of Jerome's way of life (and also of Erasmus' way of reform) are rebutted. Then Jerome himself is staunchly defended against two principal bands of critics: scholastic theologians who refuse to acknowledge his status as a theologian and certain humanist detractors who find fault with his style. This defence, which forms the third major part of the biography, follows in logical order after the introduction on method and the narrative account of Jerome's life, but the latter in turn is the proof and confirmation for the defence Erasmus will make. The whole is extremely well structured and developed and conforms to the formal divisions of the oration as both the ancients and Erasmus describe them.[2] There is an exordium, a statement of facts or narration, an argumentation consisting of proof and refutation, and a peroration. The work also complies with rhetorical precepts in its more detailed arrangements and style.[3]

In the architectonics of rhetoric form follows function. Erasmus' purpose gave shape to the *Life of Jerome* and determined its specific character and thrust. As Coppens points out, it is above all a plea on behalf of the ideas and reforms Erasmus held most dear.[4] Jerome is an exemplar, a model to be followed: he is the ideal Christian scholar, the right kind of monk, the true theologian. To tell his authentic story and defend him against his critics is to argue the case for the reforms in theology and religious life that Erasmus sought. Indeed Erasmus identified with Jerome, and the life in many respects is his own justification and defence, an *apologia pro vita sua*. We love

those in whom we see our own resemblance, Erasmus realized.[5] But even as a personal projection – an aspect of the life that should not be overemphasized – Jerome is a historic model, and Erasmus' portrait of him embodies a programme and a plea for humanist reform.

It is interesting to observe how Erasmus accomplishes his purpose. The narrative of Jerome's life focuses on the saint's education, on his preparation to be the great scholar, writer, and theologian he will become.[6] The import of this emphasis is obvious. Erasmus is asserting that the thorough education he describes is essential for the theologian, and he is also asserting that theology is the study of Holy Scripture and requires every talent, every skill. He is also defending this thesis against his scholastic opponents, who had a very different concept of that sacred discipline. We are here at the heart of Erasmus' reform humanism: his aim to revitalize theological study, to restore the true theology of the early church. In this endeavour Jerome led the way and represented the goal.

The third major part of the life, which takes up the defence of Jerome against his critics, continues this central theme. The chief of these critics are the *barbari*, the antihumanist scholastic theologians who disapprove of Jerome's learning and deny him the status of a theologian. Erasmus derides them for taking the so-called dream of Jerome seriously and attacks them for not recognizing in Jerome the hallmarks of a genuine theologian. The second group of critics are at the other end of the spectrum. These are the pedantically critical humanists who feel that Jerome was not Ciceronian enough in his style. The charge is paradoxical in view of the story of the dream. Erasmus sharply attacks the notion that the Christian author must speak exactly as Cicero did, and his argument here foreshadows the longer attack he will make years later in his *Ciceronianus*.[7] It is characteristic that Erasmus fights both extremes – those who exaggerated the demands of *bonae litterae* as well as those who ignored them entirely – in the name of an effective and judicious Christian humanism.

The criticism may be made that Erasmus' *Life of Jerome* is too partial, or too apologetic, and that in presenting his subject Erasmus sometimes departs from the historical accuracy of which he boasted. In a certain sense perhaps this is true – he exaggerates Rufinus' culpability, he is overdefensive about Jerome – but Erasmus was not striving for a complete or totally objective picture. He was giving us Jerome as an exemplar and arguing the cause of a humanist theology, and he selected details accordingly. Yet the validity of his portrait – its *fides* – is certainly sound.[8] And indeed its historicity extends still further. Erasmus did break with the earlier hagiography of the saint and attempt to reconstruct his life accurately on the

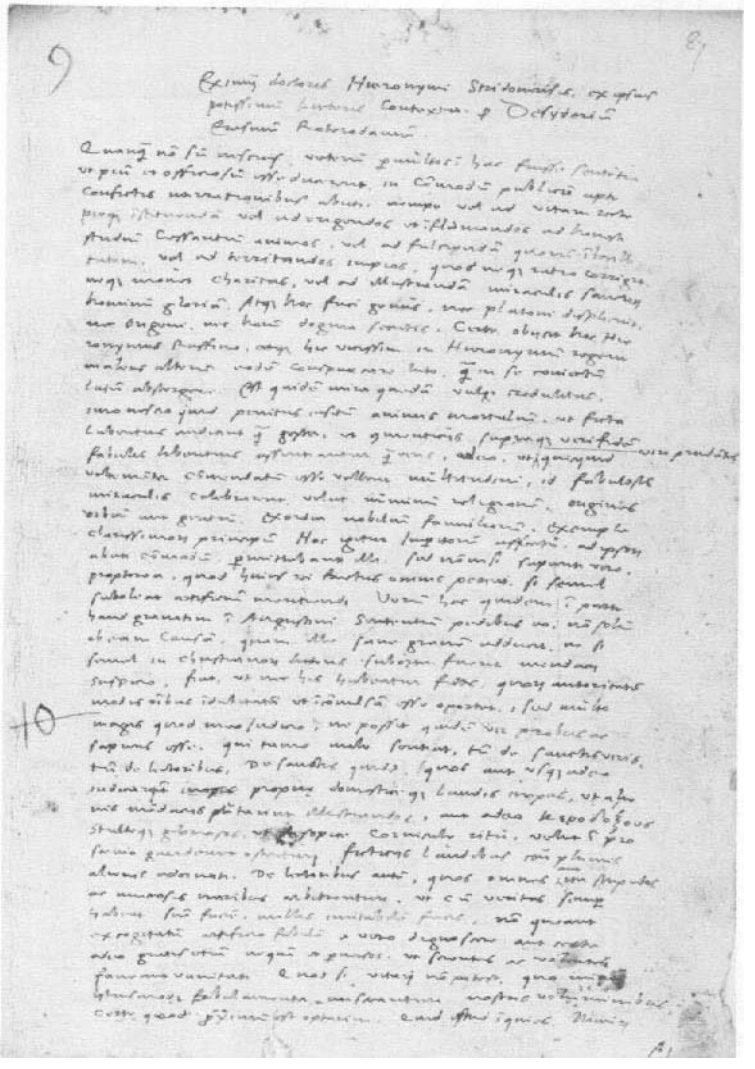
basis of the historical evidence. His success in this endeavour is one of the most striking characteristics of the *Life*. That so authentic a portrait emerged within in the context of Erasmus' purpose is a measure both of his historical perception and his rhetorical skill.

The English translation of the *Life* has been made from the composite text in *Opuscula* 134–90.[9] Additions, omissions, and other changes in the text in the 1524 and 1533 editions have been indicated in the notes.

THE LIFE OF THE EMINENT DOCTOR JEROME OF STRIDON COMPOSED MAINLY FROM HIS OWN WRITINGS BY DESIDERIUS ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM

I am indeed not unaware[1] that very many of the ancients thought it a pious and dutiful practice to make use of suitable stories, which they invented out of concern for the common weal. Their aim in fact was either to offer precepts for the proper and virtuous conduct of life or to arouse and inflame the minds of laggards to the pursuit of goodness or to give support to the weakness of individuals or to put fear into the wicked, whom neither reason reforms nor love moves, or to illuminate by the miraculous the glory of saintly men. And this kind of artifice neither Plato nor Origen nor others who were their disciples found unacceptable.[2] Certainly Jerome charges Rufinus with this practice,[3] and he responded in turn to Jerome, preferring to befoul him with the same mud that had bespattered him than to wipe it off. There exists in the common man what I might call an extraordinary credulity, an indescribable something indeed deeply ingrained in the human mind, which makes him prefer to listen to fiction rather than to fact and to be more willing to assent to stories that are invented and beyond credence than to what is true. So it was that men of good judgment in the past embellished with miraculous tales themes they wished to commend with special emphasis to the public, as for instance the worship of the gods, the origins of cities or nations, the beginnings of noble families, and the examples of famous princes. Therefore the ancients permitted them to exploit this disposition of the untutored for their own good, restricting the licence however to the wise man, since every advantage of this practice would be lost once the device of lying was suspected.

But in this matter I am not reluctant to stand with Augustine,[4] and this not only for the reason he cites, a weighty reason, to be sure. He feared that once the suspicion of deceit had arisen in Christian literature trust would be withheld even from those whose credibility must be completely beyond doubt and destruction. But a much weightier reason in my view is that no man can be good and wise if he has such a low opinion of saintly men as well as of his readers. As far as the saints are concerned he has judged them either so deficient in personal and intrinsic worth that he thinks their lives have to be brightened by the inventions of others or so vainglorious and stupidly boastful that like Aesop's little crow[5] they delight in being displayed, as it were, on the stage adorned with the exotic plumage of false



Erasmus *Hieronymi Stridonensis vita*
First page of autograph manuscript
Öffentliche Bibliothek, University of Basel, Erasmuslade
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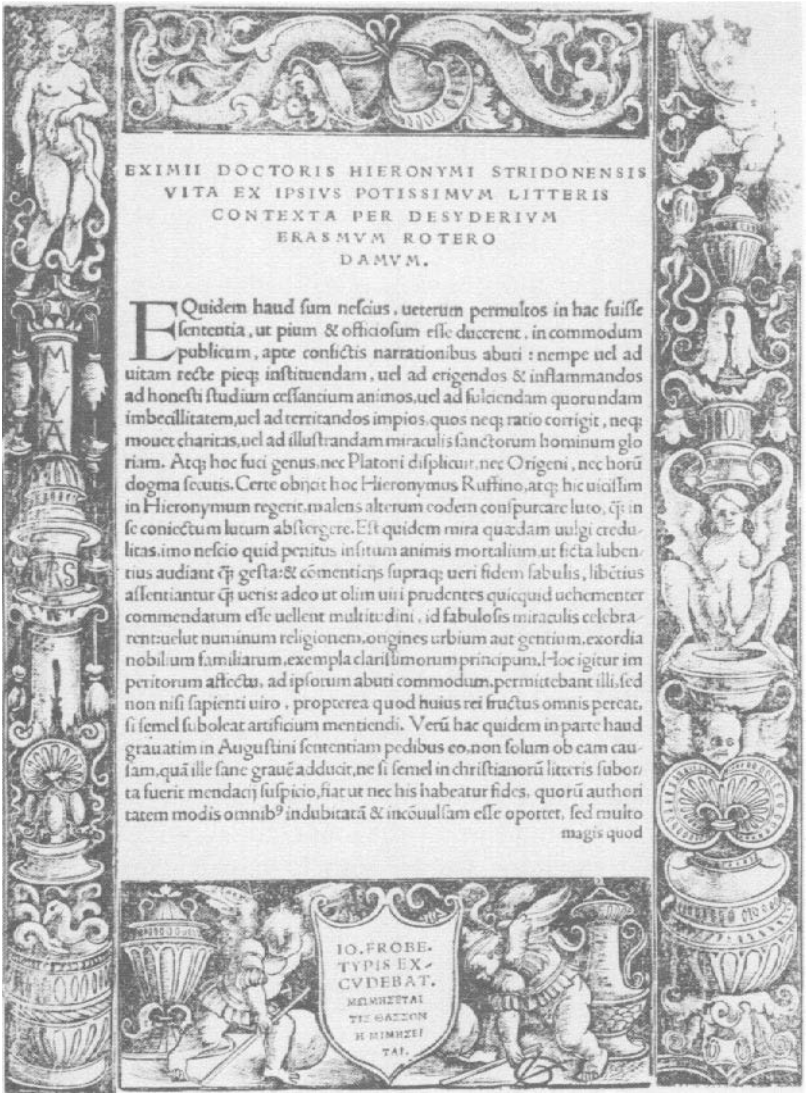


EXIMII DOCTORIS HIERONYMI STRIDONENSIS
VITA EX IPSIVS POTISSIMVM LITTERIS
CONTEXTA PER DESYDERIVM
ERASMVM ROTERO
DAMVM.

EQuidem haud ſum neſcius, ueterum permultos in hac fuiſſe ſententia, ut pium & officioſum eſſe ducerent, in commodum publicum, apte confictis narrationibus abuti: nempe uel ad uitam recte pieq; inſtituendam, uel ad erigendos & inflammandos ad honeſti ſtudium ceſſantium animos, uel ad fulciendam quorundam imbecillitatem, uel ad territandos impios, quos neq; ratio corrigit, neq; mouet charitas, uel ad illuſtrandam miraculis ſanctorum hominum gloriam. Atq; hoc fuci genus nec Platoni diſplicuit, nec Origeni, nec horũ dogma ſecutis. Certe obijcit hoc Hieronymus Ruffino, atq; hic uicißim in Hieronymum regerit, malens alterum eodem conſpurcare luto, q̃s in ſe coniectum lutum abſtergere. Eſt quidem mira quædam uulgi credulitas, imo neſcio quid penitus inſitum animis mortalium, ut ficta lubentius audiant q̃ geſta: & cõmentiçs ſupraq; ueri fidem fabulis, libẽtius aſſentiantur q̃ ueris: adeo ut olim uiri prudentes quicquid uehementer commendatum eſſe uellent multitudini, id fabuloſis miraculis celebrarent: uelut numinum religionem, origines urbium aut gentium, exordia nobilium familiarum, exempla clariſſimorum principum. Hoc igitur imperitorum affectu, ad ipſorum abuti commodum, permittebant illi, ſed non niſi ſapienti uiro, propterea quod huius rei fructus omnis pereat, ſi ſemel ſuboleat artificium mentiendi. Verũ hac quidem in parte haud grauatim in Auguſtini ſententiam pedibus eo, non ſolum ob eam cauſam, quã ille ſane graue adduxit, ne ſi ſemel in chriſtianorũ litteris ſubortа fuerit mendacij ſuſpicio, fiat ut nec his habeatur fides, quorũ authoritatem modis omnib⁹ indubitatã & incõuulſam eſſe oportet, ſed multo magis quod

IO. FROBE-
TYPIS EX-
CVDEBAT.
ΜΕΜΝΗΣΤΑΙ
ΤΗΣ ΘΑΣΣΟΝ
Η ΜΙΜΗΣΕΙ
ΤΑΙ.

Hieronymi opera 1 (Basel: Froben 1516) f 4, the beginning of the *Hieronymi Stridonensis vita*
Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, Victoria University, University of Toronto
The opening words of the autograph, 'Quamquam non sum nescius,' were changed to 'Equidem haud sum nescius' in the printed text.

virtue. And as far as his readers are concerned he has thought that they are one and all either so stupid and insensitive that, although truth always has its own visage, which no disguise can reproduce, they are unable to distinguish a craftily devised story from the truth or even so gratuitously wicked and perverse that knowingly and willingly they favour deception.

And if the presence of fables of this kind in our books is unavoidable, I would certainly wish the next best thing. What is that? you will ask. Surely it is that the artist be exceptional and prudent and a clever inventor of falsehood. For according to Socrates no one is better suited to tell a lie than the man most fitted to tell the truth, since he considers it the role of the same artist to speak truth most assuredly and to utter nothing at all that is true.[6] Indeed with this purpose Herodotus composed his history and with this plan Xenophon described the education of Cyrus,[7] not with the objective of presenting historical truth but of offering a model of the upright prince. And no different, I think, was the purpose of the illustrious Homer, whom one can rightly call a sea of fables. But these authors, although their inventive powers earned for them recognition of their talent and eloquence, have been, in so far as they portray and set forth a mischievous exemplar of virtue, no mean obstacle in the path of human life. Indeed Herodotus represents the majority of princes as stupid; Xenophon has portrayed one prince as crafty and wily rather than as truly prudent and wholesome; Homer characterized the gods in such a way that no self-respecting city would want them in civic office. Then he has so depicted the wives of the gods that no upright citizen would either desire or tolerate such a spouse in his home. Finally he has represented the sons of the gods in such a way that no father in his right mind would wish to have children like them. Consequently Plato had good reason to deny him a place in his Republic.[8] Nor would even the flimsiest reason have existed for the illustrious Alexander the Great to envy Achilles such a herald of his achievements,[9] had he fully understood what it is to play the role of a truly great and wholesome prince.

I think that nothing is better than to portray the saints just as they actually were, and if even a fault is discovered in their lives this very imperfection turns into an example of piety for us. But if anyone takes delight at all in fiction, and if with practised hand he fashions the likeness of a holy man, whatever his fame may be, without resort to sackcloth, hair shirts, scourgings, prodigious fasts, and incredible vigils, but under the influence of Christ's own teaching, first with a thorough understanding of the meaning of Christian piety and then with a skilful expression of its image, that man perhaps I will tolerate. Although an artist may represent

ever so much of the brilliance and light of a jewel, an imitation certainly never reaches a jewel's genuine sparkle. Truth has its own power[10] matched by no artifice. Moreover, who would put up with those writers who, rather than honour the saints for us, debase them with their childish, ignorant, foolish, and feeble-minded nonsense?

In this regard St Jerome, except for the fact that in the words of the Greek proverb he frequently 'blew his own horn,'[11] was not too fortunate. Although he who had sung the praises of Christ and the saints with a tongue so learned and honeyed was one person who especially deserved to be commended to posterity with an erudition and eloquence equal to his own, he fell – by what stroke of fate I do not know – into the hands of one I must call a ranter, a man so consistently like himself and unlike Jerome that it is uncertain what in him is most astounding – the extraordinary absence of style and eloquence or the conspicuous ignorance of literature or the amazing shamelessness of his lying. This man, were he alive, truly deserves to be buried publicly under a shower of stones hurled by every human hand, since in his view all men are stones, not human beings. Who in reading the frivolous ditties of that fellow, unless he is a complete blockhead, would not immediately sense an actor who has assumed a role and who, calling to mind for us a Vertumnus or a Proteus,[12] is now Eusebius of Cremona, now Cyril, now Augustine, now Ambrose, sometimes, if it be his whim, Damasus, and several times, please God, Jerome himself?[13] But regardless of the plumage he may be arrayed in, when he appears before us, his voice everywhere betrays the cuckoo that he is. Everywhere the same charm of discourse, the same beauty of style! And his stupidity, to go no further, is certainly clear from the fact that he has Jerome a short time before his death entrust his commentaries to Damasus who, according to the testimony of Jerome himself in more than one place, died before him. Yet this author, about whom more will be said elsewhere,[14] so deficient in learning and eloquence that his want of talent can cast a pall of darkness over any theme, however bright, and so dull-witted that his words cannot lend even to the clearest truths the semblance of reality, introduces into the life of Jerome ridiculous tales of miracles and stories of the most shameless falsity. These fictions however he did not invent – were this so, he might have been given credit for some talent – but from the most popular accounts they were twisted in a manner as ridiculous as it was dishonest. How fortunate Jerome was to have so distinguished a herald! In fact the dish did not lack a suitable cover.[15] This writer found his readers; he found those to quote him and, more amazingly, scholars like Platina and Volterra,[16] who, I suspect, never drew those quotations directly from him but had heard them in sermons or

had only seen excerpted fragments. A few also imitated this most shameless writer, but so brilliantly that everything appears to be by the same hand. And in these writings you would find neither erudition, nor eloquence, nor prudence, nor diligence, and beyond all this you would find least of all what in historical writing is the prime desideratum, namely trustworthiness.[17] Is this, I ask, to narrate the lives of the saints or rather to debase them?

I therefore may be unequal to the subject and may lack the support of records that invite confidence; yet in good faith and with all possible care I have constructed the life of the great saint from Prosper, Severus, Orosius,[18] Rufinus (calumniator though he is), and from such other authors whose credibility should not entirely be disregarded, but above all I have based my inquiry into Jerome's life on the works of Jerome himself. For who would have a better knowledge of Jerome than Jerome himself? Or who would give a truer picture of him? If Julius Caesar is the most dependable authority for his own military exploits, how much more reasonable is it to trust Jerome's account of his own story? I therefore have looked into all of Jerome's works and have reduced to narrative form the material I was able to gather from scattered parts of his writings. In doing this I invented nothing, because to me the greatest miracle is the miracle of Jerome as he expresses himself to us in his many works of lasting and pre-eminent quality. And if extravagant tales of wondrous happenings are necessary for the reader's pleasure, let him take up Jerome's books, in which there are almost as many miracles as there are opinions.

Now our eminent subject was born in 331 AD during the reign of the emperor Constantine in the town of Stridon.[19] Stridon had once been located near the border of Dalmatia and Pannonia and even then, according to the testimony of Jerome himself in his *Catalogue of Illustrious Writers*, had been destroyed by the rapacious Goths. Today some writers, including Biondo,[20] would identify it with a town that is now generally called Sdrigna, a hamlet in Istria, a region of Italy, situated between shaggy Petra, Portula, and Primons, to use the names now current. To support this claim they add that a monument to his father Eusebius with an epitaph engraved in metal is to be seen there, their object undoubtedly being to claim Jerome for their Italy. It is my opinion that this sort of ambition and attitude is hardly worthy of serious people and indeed entirely unworthy of Christians. Let the man who makes a most careful study of the writings of Jerome and who then describes his life most accurately, let him by right, I say, claim Jerome as his own, even if his place of birth should be far beyond Britain.

He had a younger brother named Paulinianus; he had a sister but is silent about her name. There was a maternal aunt Castorina, with whom

some disagreement had occurred about a family matter, if I am not mistaken. In the gentlest letters,[21] however, he asks for a reconciliation. According to his own testimony his father was called Eusebius, a name derived from the Greek word for piety. This is not without significance for the future: it is very fitting that a hero of 'saintly name' (this is what Jerome means in Greek) be the offspring of a 'pious man.' The glory of that name, I submit, is worthy of a Christian, a name derived not from genealogies or from portrait busts of prominent ancestors, not from the destruction of towns or the annihilation of troops, but from a life spent in piety and holiness. He has nothing more to say about his father; he does not indicate whether he was a plebeian or a patrician, poor or rich, a magistrate or a private citizen. Some, however, falsely maintain that he was born of high nobility, and this to enable them to represent him as a city prefect. On the other hand it is reasonable to suppose that before the destruction of his native town he was of intermediate rank and moderate means. Jerome nowhere divulged his mother's name, although he does mention that both his parents were Christian.[22]

He was carefully educated at home by his parents, and in an atmosphere of parental love and domestic affection together with Bonosus[23] he drank in the knowledge of Christ from the very beginning. Then imbued with the rudiments of Christian piety and at the same time with a liberal education commensurate with his age, while still a child he was sent to Rome, the most distinguished teacher, as it were, in that era of both religious and secular learning, to be instructed in the liberal arts, as he himself declares in the eleventh chapter of his commentary on Ezekiel.[24] For although in those times literary studies also flourished among the Gauls, Spaniards, and Africans, in the provinces the character of the people made for some falling off in quality, but at Rome, the very source of these studies, they remained purer and less corrupt. And for this reason Jerome himself praises the mother of the monk Rusticus for having afterwards sent her son to Rome so that Roman dignity might temper the splendour and flamboyance of Gallic speech,[25] although in Gaul the liberal arts were in a very flourishing state. The wisest parents, it seems, understood that it was very important among whom and by whom a child was first taught. And what is best is never learned more successfully than in those callow years when minds are no less tenacious than malleable for any shape you may be fashioning. And so just as if they already understood at that time that this child of theirs had been born not for themselves but for the world at large, they saw to it that he was educated for the service of mankind and not for their own private concerns. He learned Greek and Latin literature right from

the beginning, as he himself testifies, and his early training in these studies gave him a surer grasp. For one may sense something lacking in ease and polish in those who have come to the study of literature later in life. Not without reason therefore was Jerome glad that the grammarians and rhetoricians he studied with from boyhood worked him to the bone. The former taught him to speak with exactness and clarity, the latter to speak with brilliance, dignity, and wisdom. It is to the instruction of these men that we owe the incomparable Doctor of the church, not to the schools of the garrulous sophists.

Who would not have been aroused to the highest hope even then and have a presentiment of something extraordinary in this child? Such expectations would be natural from a consideration first of the character of his parents; then of the richness of his endowments – an abundant and ready talent, a fiery and untiring spirit; from a consideration too of Rome as his foster mother – a Rome, I believe, considerably less corrupt at that time than now; and finally of his distinguished teachers, Donatus in grammar, Victorinus in rhetoric.[26] I am aware, however, that some doubt exists whether this was the famous Donatus whose learned commentaries on Terence and Virgil are extant. Also whether Victorinus had taught him is not fully clear from Jerome's remarks. He recalls both in an appendix to the Chronicle of Eusebius in these words: 'Victorinus the rhetorician and Donatus the grammarian, my teacher, are regarded as distinguished men at Rome, and there is a statue of Victorinus in the Forum of Trajan in recognition of his attainments.'[27] Jerome is describing only one of them here, namely Donatus, as his teacher rather than both; otherwise he would have said 'my teachers.' In support of this same inference is the fact that neither in the *Catalogue of Illustrious Writers* nor anywhere else, as far as I remember, does he call Victorinus his teacher when he mentions him. Indeed it seems that Jerome gave scant approval to Victorinus' entire style. This he states without any obscurity in a letter he wrote to the monk Paulinus when he says: 'Victorinus crowned with the glorious crown of martyrdom cannot express what he understands.'[28] And again in the *Catalogue of Illustrious Writers* he says: 'Victorinus, African by birth, taught rhetoric at Rome during the reign of Constantine, and as a very old man in his devotion to the faith of Christ he wrote books against Arius in the dialectical fashion, very obscure books which even the learned do not understand.'[29] But concerning Victorinus I leave judgment to the reader. Concerning Donatus, however, Jerome removed every doubt in the first part of his *Apologia* against Rufinus in these words: 'I believe that as a boy you read Asper's commentaries on Virgil and Sallust, Vulcatius' on the orations of Cicero, Victorinus' on the latter's dialogues, and the commentaries of my teacher Donatus on the

comedies of Terence as well as on Virgil, and those of others on other writers.'[30] He also cites Donatus in the same way in his exposition of the first chapter of Ecclesiastes.[31]

Influenced by scholars of this calibre he now gained greater maturity in the study of literature, and he left no branch of knowledge untouched. He applied himself to Porphyry's *Isagoge*[32] and to the philosophy of Aristotle, Plato, the Stoics, and all the others. He became acquainted with them; he did not surrender himself to them, nor did he grow old with them, as if on the rocks of the Sirens upon which very many now end their days. But he occupied himself with rhetoric more diligently; this after he had tasted all the disciplines, especially those which have greater relevance to that art: history, cosmography, and the knowledge of antiquity. The reason for this was in part his belief that up to that time theology in the Latin world was practically incapable of effective speech, a situation, he felt, that turned very many away from reading theological works. He hoped that more would take pleasure in sacred literature if theologians were to match the majesty of their discipline with dignity of style.[33] And in part it was his purpose that some day he might have the power to refute the pagans who viewed the Christians with contempt for their lack of eloquence and style. He testifies to this in many passages, and if this were not so, his writings proclaim that he had been most diligent in declamatory exercises and that in his youth he had amused himself with fictitious debates and the devious tricks of the rhetoricians.

Among others he had these distinguished fellow students. There was Pammachius,[34] of the noblest lineage, afterwards the son-in-law of Paula and the husband of Paulina, who after the latter's death took up a monastic way of life. He was a man of such integrity that he was pressed to take the exalted office of supreme pontiff, but, as Jerome writes elsewhere, in his case it was more honourable to have deserved that dignity than to have held it. There was Bonosus, also a man of the highest birth, who later became a monk. And there was Heliodorus,[35] whose virtues brought him afterwards to the office of bishop.

Here, meanwhile, it is clear that Jerome was reborn in Christ, that he had sworn allegiance to him, so that for this reason at least Rome could rightly claim him as her own, since by baptism we are indeed enrolled as Christians. He clearly indicated this in a letter to Pope Damasus,[36] declaring that he wished to follow the faith of his city, in which he had received the vesture of Christ. Now he is not thinking about the priesthood, I believe. In baptism it was customary for a white garment to be given as a symbol of innocence, and those who had been baptized were enjoined to keep the whiteness of their garments unsullied.

Therefore after receiving a thorough education in profane literature, which some call secular, he applied himself to more important studies and in this regard imitated most praiseworthy men like Pythagoras, Plato, and Apollonius – this better to equip his mind for ranging through the areas of philosophy. Thus he ranged everywhere throughout Gaul, and it seems he dwelt in several places; he even remembers their location and their names, and he made many friends there. In a letter to Florentius he declares that at Trier he copied in his own hand Hilary's great work *De synodis*, which he sent for some time later when he was living in the desert that forms the boundary between Syria and the land of the Saracens.[37] And according to his own testimony elsewhere he was accompanied by Bonosus on these travels.[38] Thus he diligently examined all the libraries and met men who were distinguished either for their learning or for their moral integrity, and everywhere he appropriated whatever he thought useful for Christian life. At length like an industrious and enterprising merchant, not richer in gold but richer in experience, in literary refinement, and in devotional fervour, he returned to both his homes, that of his birth and that of his rebirth.

He then began to think about choosing a way of life and about a suitable place, because he was not unaware that human happiness depends above all on the assumption of a mode of life suited to a person's natural disposition and chosen by careful reflection and not by chance. For some plunge headlong into a way of life before they know themselves.[39] And some on the other hand death overtakes while they delay and deliberate. He reflected that ancient Rome still smacked of paganism and that youth had too little protection amidst the fleshpots of that city, since somewhere he calls it Babylon.[40] Then he pondered that his native land also had been corrupted by uncouth pleasures, a matter he is frank about in one of his letters.[41] 'In my country,' he says, 'backwoods that it is, man's belly is god, and he lives for the day, and the holier man is the one who has more money.' Therefore after consulting with his friends he thought about withdrawing from society so that he might totally dedicate himself to sacred studies and to Christ more freely and more readily. Even at that stage the world in which Christians and pagans then were intermingled offended the pious sensibilities of the young Jerome. The inevitable result was that among those who professed Christ the majority were Christians in name rather than in their way of life and that for truly upright minds the desire to live a devout life was more real than the ability to do so. In marriage he saw indeed the shipwreck of freedom, to say nothing more. In addition he saw that the office of clerics and bishops, because honours, wealth, and worldly concerns overwhelmed even them, whether they wished it or not, and carried them astray, was exposed to the gravest perils. And the life of many of them displeased him,

for even then the priestly devotion that characterized earlier times was degenerating into tyranny and arrogance.

After he had weighed the matter in all its aspects, therefore, he chose the monastic life. I must say, on the chance that the reader may labour under a misapprehension, that the life of a monk was far different at that time from what we see today, trammelled as it is by ceremonial formality. On the contrary, those for whom freedom especially was dear made their profession as monks.[42] For first of all that freedom continued inviolate once the decision had been made, the power to come and go as one wished remained, and so did the most delightful and unrestricted opportunities for literary pursuits. One was spurred on by his own bent to study, fasts, psalms, and vigils, or one was attracted by example, not coerced by the petty rules of men. Dress was simple; it was not, however, prescribed but was the free choice of each. It was a mode of dress that did not make a person conspicuous or call attention to itself by its strange novelty but that displayed a Christian simplicity. There were no binding vows except those that every Christian takes. Finally if by chance anyone had regretted this choice in life, the entire penalty was simply a criticism of his inconstancy. If one seeks confirmation of this, let him read the life of Hilarion,[43] let him read the rule for the monastic life addressed to Rusticus[44] and likewise the one addressed to Paulinus,[45] let him read the letter beginning 'Audi filia,' which defines the three kinds of monks in Egypt.[46] In fact among other things that kind of life also afforded these advantages: because of it one could more honourably cast off the bonds of affinity and consanguinity, a heavy burden to be sure for one to whom nothing is more pleasurable than freedom for study. Also those who were professed as monks were considered entirely excused from public activities and from service and duties at the imperial court. Lastly they were less vulnerable to the tyranny of some bishops, who even then became overbearing. The title 'monk' in no way militated against the performance of a clerical office; and from no class of men were bishops more often chosen. Nor was profession as a monk at that time anything else than the practice of the original, free, and purely Christian life. Attention, I thought, ought to be called to these facts in passing to prevent anyone from the common practice of making Jerome the author of their rule.[47] He has no connection with such rules.

He tried to win over several of his companions to the same way of life. Pammachius, however, always one with him in the companionship of study, strongly disagreed in the choice of a way of life. Jerome favoured the greatest freedom; Pammachius preferred the bonds of marriage. Bonosus settled his affairs and left his native land, parents, and friends, with books his only companions. He withdrew to a deserted isle, a wild place with

breakers pounding the shore on every side. Indeed he flew off in advance of Jerome, and breaking loose from the snares of the world he betook himself to the liberty of Christ, but it was Jerome who first inspired him. Jerome recalls this elsewhere but especially in the letter beginning 'Plus Deum.' 'Your Bonosus,' he says, 'nay mine, or better our Bonosus, already climbs the ladder foreseen in Jacob's dream; he carries his cross, he does not think about the morrow, he does not look back. He sows in tears that he may reap in joy, and in the symbolic manner of Moses he lifts up the serpent in the desert. Let the untrue wonders in the writings of the Greeks as well as the Romans yield to this truth. Behold an honourable lad educated with us in the secular arts, for whom the esteem of his comrades above all was wealth enough. He gave little heed to the claims of mother, sisters, and a brother who was dearest to him, and like a new settler in paradise took up his abode on a shipwreck isle with the pounding sea all around, its rough crags and bare rocks and solitude inspiring fear. No farmers there, no monks, and not even the little Onesimus, whom you know and in whose brotherly affection he used to delight, accompanies him and clings to his side in so desolate a place.'[48] And a little later he says: 'You know how he and I together grew from tender infancy to full maturity, how the same nurses held and fondled us, how the same bearers embraced and cradled us, how we shared the same lodging and ate the same food when after studies in Rome I was on my way to the semi-barbarous river banks, and how the desire to worship you first began with me. Remember, I beg, that this warrior of yours was once a recruit with me.'[49] So far we have simply recounted the words of Jerome, who lauds Bonosus also in another letter in which he compares his own solitude with the life of his friend.

And not very long after Bonosus withdrew from the world Jerome himself went to Syria. He had put his domestic affairs in order and had secured funds for the journey. He took with him a very extensive library, which had been collected with the greatest effort. Heliodorus was his travelling companion as well as his partner in this undertaking. He remained with Jerome for quite some time in Syria, but for reasons that are not clear he changed his mind about the kind of life he was living. It was not because he disapproved of that life, but because he did not find it suitable to his particular temperament. The path you run is not very important; what is important is that you hasten towards Christ.[50] Thus Heliodorus changed his plans and returned to his family. A little later Jerome wrote him a very elegant letter on the merits and advantages of the solitary life.[51] He dispels with admirable courtesy throughout the suspicion of inconstancy on the part of his friend, ascribing his departure to his own faults. I might in passing note this to the credit of Jerome. Some on the basis of their own

usual behaviour imagine him to have been somewhat harsh and discourteous, although no one was ever kinder and more refined. He writes Julian the deacon in these words: 'Our saintly brother Heliodorus was here, and although he desired to dwell with me my misdeeds forced his departure.'[52]

And one may almost make the inference that they first visited Jerusalem together and in making the rounds of the holy places venerated the footsteps of the Redeemer. There was at that time such great religious feeling among all in the city of Jerusalem that one who had not been in the city felt that he was lacking in devotion. After that, forsaken by his dear friend, he suffered serious illnesses caused by the unfamiliar climate and mode of life and by the hardships of travel. He regained his health through the kindness of some monks, especially of Evagrius, whose hospitality he also availed himself of for quite some time.[53] With health restored and armed with a heart all aflame with zeal for service in the militia of Christ he withdrew far into the wild desert that forms a desolate boundary between the Syrians and the Agareni (now called by the corrupt name Saracens), a desert uninhabited except by wild beasts and serpents and here and there groups of monks. Though Jerome was far off in the desert, Evagrius was a frequent visitor.

Meanwhile Rufinus, whose close friendship later turned into the bitterest enmity, himself also a monk, had gone to Nitria in Egypt. Jerome offers congratulations to him on his arrival there in that letter we just cited.[54] It closes with this remark: 'Do not, I beg you, let your mind lose sight of your friend as have your eyes. A friend is long sought, difficult to find, and difficult to keep.' And a little later: 'Friendship that could end was never genuine.' It is as if even then Jerome had a premonition that Rufinus would forsake their friendship.

At about the same time Jerome's sister adopted the rule of virginity as her way of life at the urging of the man named Julian.[55] This was far different from the situation of women today, who are shut up behind iron grillwork like untamed beasts. I say this not because I condemn the common practice of the age but because I grieve that Christian piety has deteriorated to the point that the purity of virgins must be secured through the constraint provided by iron bars and prison walls. Only that devotion is acceptable to Christ which is not hammered out by force but is offered freely and voluntarily. Jerome recalls the circumstances of his sister's conversion in a letter to Chromatius beginning 'Non debet caritas dividere,'[56] which indicates that she was converted by Julian, to whom he warmly commends her. She was at a dangerous age, and he was fearful of everything, even of what was safe. Indeed he intimated that she had even lapsed to a degree in the early years of youth, writing: 'Jesus gave her to me for the wound which

the devil had inflicted and restored her from death to life.' This was not because she had fallen into debauchery but because uncertain of her dedication to a life of virginity she had given thought to marriage.

It has not been clearly ascertained at what time Paulinianus, Jerome's younger brother, entered into the religious life –a brother who he testifies was very dear to him and who still in his youth accompanied him on the journey to Syria and who with him served Christ in the monastery at Bethlehem. It is more probable, I think, that this occurred on his second trip to Syria, because Jerome declares that the letter to Heliodorus that begins 'Quanto amore'[57] had been written when he was a young man, scarcely more than a boy, unless perchance for one now quite old boyhood seemed a more advanced period of life. But Paulinianus, then still a young man – he was barely thirty years old – attained the dignity of the priesthood. This was what prompted John, bishop of Jerusalem, later to make a false charge against Jerome, asserting that Paulinianus was below the legal age when raised to that dignity.[58] Jerome responded fully to these calumnies.[59] Further he also mentions his brother in the letter beginning 'Sanato vulneri.'[60] 'We were compelled,' he says, 'to send my brother Paulinianus home in order to sell the half-ruined little country house that had escaped the violence of the barbarians and that held the ashes of our parents.' Again, in the letter beginning 'Diu te Romae' he says: 'Paulinianus has not yet returned from home. You saw him, I think, at Aquileia in the residence of saintly Pope Chromatius.'[61] There is more on this in the letter beginning 'Epistola tua haereditatis.'[62]

But although it is not easy to set forth clearly at what time each event took place, nevertheless one may infer from the various writings of Jerome that when he first moved to Syria he did not immediately settle in any one place but changed his abode from one place to another so that he might survey all the possibilities and at length choose a dwelling-place in keeping with his desires. And one may surmise that he first lived at Jerusalem for a time and at Antioch for a time but that he left the latter city partly because he disliked the crowds there and partly because the church of Antioch was being torn apart by three bishops, Meletius, Vitalis, and Paulinus.[63] Nor did he find a peaceful abode in the desert of Chalcis – he indicates in the preface to his commentary on Obadiah that he tried to settle there[64] – because of the proximity of the Campenses, who sided with the Arian Tharsenses. Their wickedness sorely troubled this holy man, summoned daily as he was and examined on his understanding of the faith. There was insistence on three *hypostases*,[65] a term not yet found in Latin. He indicates this in two letters to Damasus, the one beginning 'Quoniam vetusta' and the other 'Importuna in evangelio.'[66] He implores and entreats him to tell him with whom in Syria he

should be in communion, since he saw scarcely anywhere the purity of the Roman faith. Finally his agitation because of this turmoil more than once made him regret coming to Syria.

At length he went into hiding, as it were, in that most remote desert which separates Syria from the Saracens, as we have said, thinking it preferable to deal with wild beasts and barbarian pillagers than with such Christians. Here for four years, far removed from the assembly of men, he communed only with Christ and with his books. With dedication and with all his strength[67] he carried out his aims so that he perfected for us that extraordinary model of Christian holiness. First there was the zeal to wash away in a flood of tears the faults of youth and by the severity of his labours, as if with an abrasive cleansing agent, to wipe away the dirt collected through the thoughtlessness of youth. By fasting, vigils, and an unbelievable austerity in his whole life he curbed the rebellious flesh and the lustful desires of youth that kept breaking out, teaching the body to serve the spirit lest the emotions work against him in his effort to reach the heavenly life. He was rigorous in imposing punishment on himself and was most pressing in demanding work of himself. He was a taskmaster, as he says elsewhere; in short he offered himself, in the words of Paul,[68] as a spiritual sacrifice to God, the form of worship by far the most acceptable to him. He apportioned all his time to study and prayer, adding also a good part of the night for these activities; he gave the least portion to sleep, less to food, none to leisure. A prayer or hymn revived him from the fatigue of study; then restored he went back to the reading that had been interrupted.

He reread his entire library, renewing the memory of his old studies; he learned Holy Scripture word for word. He meditated on the prophets, most alert in searching out the hidden meaning of their prophecies. From the Gospels and the apostolic Letters as from the purest springs he drew the philosophy of Christ. For the first step towards filial devotion is to know the teachings of your founder. He read other exegetes with discretion and judgment, overlooking no writer at all from whom he might glean something, whether pagan or heretic. For he knew, prudent man that he was, how to gather gold from a dung-pit; he knew how to cull the honey-sweet juice from the fruit, leaving its poison for the spider; and even then he was putting in his pack whatever he could take from the Egyptians to adorn the temple of the Lord with the riches of the enemy.[69] And to make his memory more reliable and his application more prompt he would organize whatever he read by topic, sorting all items on the basis of their affinity or their opposition. It is amazing how much he favoured writers with rich talent, especially those whom the gift of eloquence also commended, even to the extent of honouring heretics with praise. He would have

gladly pardoned, had it been permissible, a defective faith out of regard for their learning, especially in the case of Origen, whom he calls his own and several of whose homilies he translated into Latin while still a youth.

With his reading he combined the practice of writing, as if skirmishing and rehearsing even then for his studies in Sacred Scripture. With what felicity he practised is clear from that one well-known essay in which he expresses his sorrow over the absence of his companion Heliodorus.[70] In this work one may recognize not only the young recruit but also the kind of general that recruit is destined to be. At this time, unless I am mistaken, he gave an allegorical interpretation of the prophet Obadiah, since he did not yet understand it as history. This he does not conceal in the preface of the later exegetical work, in which he makes amends and atones for that youthful rashness.[71] In so doing he followed the precedent of great men. Indeed in this preface much of his writing is brilliant but especially the following, which reveals a most engaging wit: 'I confess I am amazed that however badly someone writes he finds a reader like himself. He would praise me; I would blush. He would extol to the skies my mystical understanding, as it were; I with head bowed would be prevented from confessing my shame.' In short, nothing at all was overlooked that contributed to the training of a glorious Doctor of the church and a truly great theologian. This prevented any gaps in his learning or even a slight imperfection in his life that would lessen and impair the authority of his teaching.

Therefore, when in fact he realized that Sacred Scripture could neither be understood nor properly dealt with except by a knowledge of those languages in which it first was given to us, he overcame the difficulties of the Hebrew language by relentless study and attained not only an understanding of a foreign and strange tongue but also its special sound and native harshness. For this purpose he employed the most learned of the Hebrews, men whom he hired at great cost, thus emptying his purse to enrich his mind with learning. He refers to none of them by name except one Baranina, whom however he employed later in his old age. This man presented himself to him like a Nicodemus, as he himself writes,[72] since Jerome was wont to use his help at night, not so much because it was shameful for a Christian to learn from a Jew (for so strong was his passion to learn that he thought learning was splendid and glorious whatever the source) as because a Jew avoided stirring up the ill will of his race in a case where it seemed he was aiding the Christian cause. That study, which involved a great deal of sweat and weariness, he himself calls drudgery in one of his prefaces.[73] Not content with this he undertook also to learn Chaldee, a language related to Hebrew. This was because Daniel and Job and several other books in the Old

Testament, written though they were in the Hebrew alphabet, were nevertheless in the language of Chaldee. Knowing that the latter did not have as wide a currency he sought only to read Chaldee, not to speak it. Indeed he also undertook to study the language of Syria on account of that nation's commerce, a language also somewhat similar to Hebrew. He gives evidence of this several times in explaining names, as for instance *mammon*.

At this time with a zeal I might call immoderate and youthful and with a love of his childhood studies he gave an inordinate amount of attention to the imitation of the dialogues of Cicero and of Plato. For this was his purpose at that time, unless I am mistaken, and he strove to imitate these authors rather than the apostolic style. In a dream divinely sent, he was carried off to the judgment seat of God and accused of being a Ciceronian and of not being a Christian. Finally chastened by a lashing he was brought back to his senses, as he himself relates in the letter beginning 'Audi filia.'[74] I shall have something to say perhaps about my view of this matter when the passage comes up for discussion later on.

After spending several years at these holiest of labours and in the rigours of this life he still confesses that he found no kind of life pleasanter. For gradually, as it happens, what at the beginning seemed difficult and harsh became delightful, and what inherently was best was by habit made most agreeable. He did not miss the pleasures of Rome. In fact he frequently had the impression that he was not living in a wilderness but in the company of angelic choirs.[75] For some stupidly imagine that a life of solitude is a kind of grim affair, an existence more characteristic of wild beasts than of human beings, and likely to be the cause of madness rather than of holiness. Sometimes he was visited by friends, occasionally he went to see neighbouring monks, and in the exchange of letters he enjoyed friends from whom he was separated.

Further, although he wished his retirement to be permanent because it was more fruitful and tranquil, nevertheless it was to the advantage of all Christians that so outstanding an athlete of Christ at times be brought into the arena and that so extraordinary a light of the world not be hidden under a bushel for any length of time. And so, though unwilling and resistant, by virtue of divine providence guiding the affairs of men he was brought back from Syria to Rome. This came about through the agency of Epiphanius of Salamis in Cyprus and Paulinus, the bishop of Antioch, both of whom the emperor, motivated by specific needs of the church, had summoned to Rome.[76] Here at a time when his reputation for learning as well as for holiness was increasing day by day he was, I believe, ordained a priest.[77] Some say he was twenty years old when called to this honour by Liberius, then bishop of Rome. Since to my mind this is not an established fact I intend

neither to refute nor to endorse it. But to add as they do that he was made a cardinal priest is – forgive my saying so – surely false in my opinion.[78] Not only had that splendour and dignity of the cardinals which we see today not yet come to be, but in those days, I believe, the name of cardinal had not even existed. Jerome himself acknowledges the title of priest in many passages, but cardinal never. Moreover in the letter beginning 'In vetere materia' he declares that while he was still a young man he served as synodal secretary to Damasus the Roman pontiff.[79] 'Very many years ago,' he says 'I assisted Damasus the bishop of Rome with his ecclesiastical correspondence, and I replied to the inquiries of synods in East and West.' So in another passage he laments that he had left the wilderness to serve the world again.

Meanwhile he formed friendships with noble matrons, especially with Marcella,[80] who was the first woman in Rome to have the courage to profess the monastic life when that very word was exceedingly offensive to Roman ears. This burning desire took possession of her above all because of the influence of Athanasius[81] and other Egyptian priests who in avoiding the persecution of the Arian faction at that time had fled to Rome as the safest port of their common faith. For through their stories of the life of Anthony – his name still lived and his renown was a source of wonder – and of the monks living in the Thebaid, Marcella had learned of a way of life appropriate at once for virgins and for widows. She also attracted many other matrons as well as virgins to emulate her life, especially Sophronia, Principia, Paula, and Eustochium.[82] In a short time so numerous were the women professing a contempt of the world that what before by its novelty aroused ill will later came to bring great honour. Jerome stirred all of these women to study Holy Scripture, and inflamed with zeal by his teaching they advanced in this pursuit, wherefore it was more shameful that the sacred books the weaker sex embraced were being neglected by the bishops. He testifies to the zeal of Marcella in his eulogy of her more or less in these words: 'And because at that time I was thought to have some reputation in scriptural studies, she never met me without asking some questions about the sacred books.' And a little further on: 'I will only say this: whatever knowledge I had gathered by long study and made a part of myself by prolonged meditation, this she tasted, learned, and took possession of. As a result of this, after my departure from Rome appeal was made to her judgment whenever any dispute had arisen concerning the interpretation of Scripture.'[83]

Thus the name of Jerome became celebrated everywhere, so that he was unanimously acclaimed worthy of succeeding Damasus. But just as there is no shadow without the presence of light, so the fame of a most

saintly man did not fail to arouse jealousy: 'For he scorches with his own blazing light whose worth outweighs the worth of those beneath him.'[84] There were those who made false charges about that first departure to Syria and attacked him in his absence with their tongues' poisonous darts. But at Rome, dear to Pope Damasus above all others and highly regarded by him and in addition bound for three years by the closest ties of friendship to Melania[85] and Paula, ladies of the highest nobility, he made the fires of envy burn even higher. And now after enduring the hardship of so many labours like a Hercules he discovered that a snake must be vanquished at the very end, as Horace says,[86] a snake which would first discharge its poison undetected until the pretended good will erupted into a mighty blaze. There had crept unobserved into the city certain individuals of the Arian faction who now were calling their party Origenist.[87] The name was different, the error the same. In order to strengthen their influence they insinuated themselves into close relationships with noble ladies and scattered their poison in their teachings. They lured Jerome into the fellowship of their party because he had found delight in the genius of Origen above all others and had praised him highly. These Origenists were more harmful enemies because they plotted their extremely hostile acts under the guise of friendship. As a result Jerome decided to leave Rome. Now the story that I see recorded by some writers about the substitution of a woman's garment does not seem to me likely.[88] In that account he had caused both laughter and the suspicion of immorality when he unwittingly donned this garb instead of his own and decked out in this fashion set forth in the night to a service in church. Jerome was not in the habit of being so indulgent with his adversaries that he would have made no mention at all about this matter, which was so outrageously insulting. This is especially the case since it so vitally concerned the protection of his reputation for moral integrity. To ignore the story in silence would have been the mark of a man not very conscious of his own worth. He says not a word about this in the letter beginning 'Si tibi putem,'[89] which contains many complaints about various false accusations made by the envious against him. Among many other things he has this to say: 'I am infamous, I am crafty and slippery, I am a liar and deceptive with the cunning of Satan. Now what shows greater cleverness, to believe these charges or to invent them about the innocent or on the other hand to refuse to believe them about the guilty? Some would kiss my hand and slander me with a viper's tongue, some would have sorrow on their lips but joy in their heart.' And later he continues: 'One man would criticize my gait and my laugh, that man disparaged my looks, another suspected something else in my simplicity.'

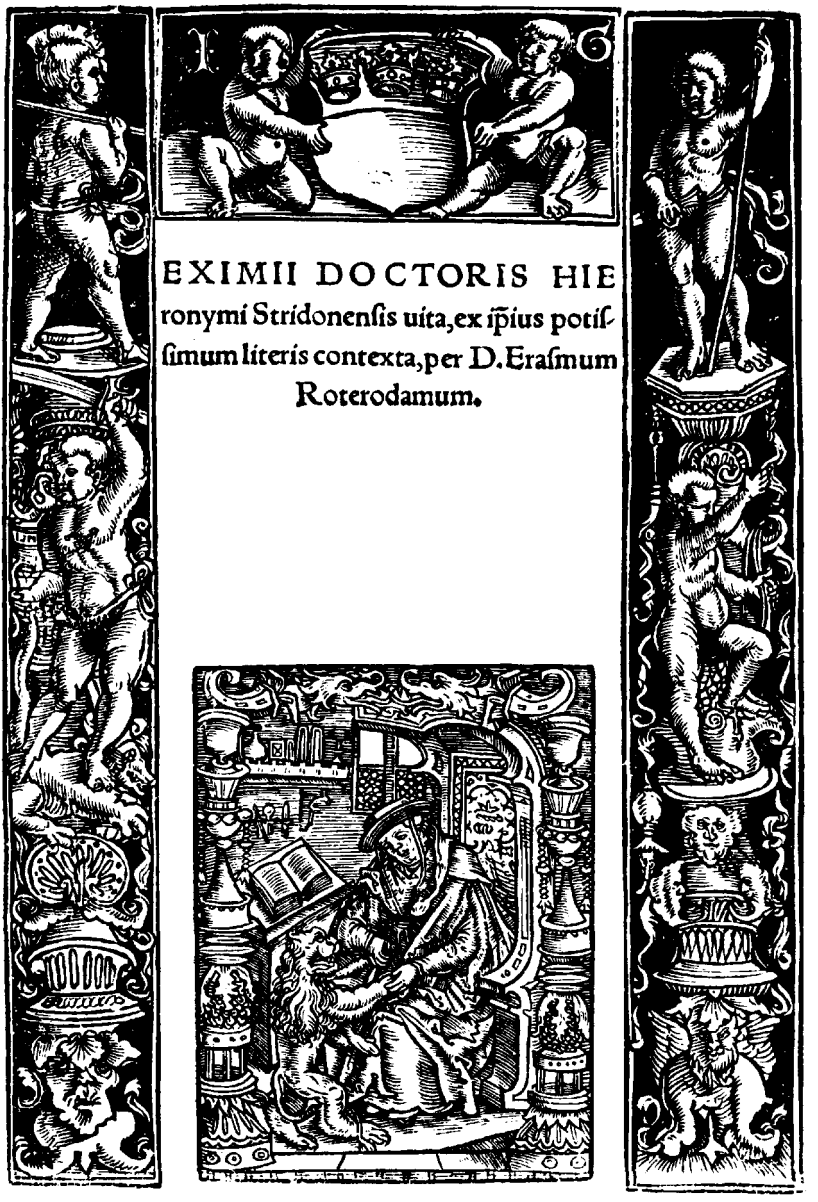
I am inclined to believe that there were many reasons why he thought

about leaving Rome. First, there was yearning for the scholarly leisure he once enjoyed and the remembrance of a tranquillity he once tasted. Secondly, the vexations of a crowded city, its irksome pleasures, and their companion, a disdainful extravagance. For even at that time when the wealth of the church was gradually increasing Christian simplicity was decreasing. Furthermore, there was ill feeling against him on the part of the Origenists,[90] whose numbers were swelling day by day, especially since at that time Rufinus was living in Rome. The latter indeed never was a true friend, I believe, and later he proved to be a treacherous enemy of the worst sort. Jerome's tract on virginity addressed to Eustochium[91] had aroused no little ill will because in it he levels the most biting criticism against clerics, monks, and virgins who were unworthy of their name. Finally, the situation had advanced to such a degree of insanity that his enemies accused him of being madly in love with Paula, the mother of Eustochium, on account of his close ties with her. Their companionship, however, rested on their mutual piety and interest in sacred studies, not on a base partnership in pleasure. In the letter we have quoted above he himself makes mention of this matter: 'I have lived with them for almost three years. I was frequently surrounded by a throng of virgins. I often discussed as well as I could the sacred books with some of them. Reading led to constant association, constant association to friendship, friendship to trust. Let them say whether they have ever seen in me anything that was unbecoming a Christian. Have I accepted money from anyone? Have I not spurned gifts both great and small? Have anyone's coins jingled in my hand? Was my conversation devious or my eye wanton? I am charged with nothing except my sex.'[92] Thus far Jerome. The name of monk exacerbated the hatred in this common talk, a name at that time detested by many who thought it intolerable that so many ladies of first rank in that city were being spirited away from their families and relatives under the pretext of religion. Jerome practically declared this when he adds to the passage I have just recorded: 'And this charge is made only when Paula and Melania are setting out for Jerusalem.'[93]

He indicates in the same place that one of Paula's servants, I believe, was suborned by enemies to accuse Jerome of being unchaste and to noise about the foul report. But when the servant had been cited for questioning he denied this under torture. For Jerome adds the following: 'Those people believed him when he was lying. Why do they not believe him when he recants? He is the same man as before: the very one who previously kept saying that I was guilty now confesses to my innocence. And certainly torture is more effective in forcing out the truth than laughter, except that that story is more readily believed which, if it is an invention, is heard with pleasure or, if it is not an invention, prompts invention. Before I had become

acquainted with the family of the saintly Paula, all the citizens of Rome were as one in their devotion to me. In the judgment of almost everyone I was deemed worthy of the highest priestly office. Damasus of blessed memory was the subject of my conversation;[94] they called me holy; they called me humble and eloquent. Did I ever enter the home of some lustful woman? Did silk raiment, glittering gems, painted faces, or greed for gold ever sweep me away? There was no other matron of Rome who would have been able to overpower my mind except one who was grieving and fasting, wretched in squalid clothes, almost blinded by tears, one whom the sun often overtook as she besought the Lord's mercy the whole night through. The Psalms were her songs, the Gospels her conversation, self-control her pleasure, fasting her life. No woman had the power to delight me except the one whom I never saw at table. But after I gave her the reverence, love, and esteem her chastity deserved, did all my virtues forthwith desert me? O envy that first bites thyself! O wily Satan ever persecuting what is holy! No other women gave the city of Rome the occasion for gossip except Paula and Melania, who contemned their wealth and left their children to raise up the Lord's cross as the standard, so to speak, of their devotion.' And on this subject there is more to say, but I shall not discuss it further, so as not to exceed the proper limits.

For these reasons Jerome was at last seized by an aversion for a city that was unworthy of the presence of so distinguished a man. And so he left Rome and returned to Syria, whether in the company of Melania and Paula is not quite clear to me.[95] It is my conjecture, however, that the ladies had preceded him, and either Jerome then followed or he arrived at the same destination by a different route. Since Rufinus had also made false allegations about his return, Jerome himself in his *Apologia* describes it in these words: 'Do you wish to have a detailed account of my departure from the city? I will keep it brief. In the month of August, the time of the trade winds, with the saintly priest Vincent and my young brother and other monks who were then staying in Rome I boarded a ship in the port of Rome. A throng of pious men saw me off, free from care as I was. I came to Rhegium; I stood on the Scyllaean shore for a little while, where I learned the old stories and the hazardous passage of the cunning Ulysses and the songs of the Sirens and the insatiable whirlpool of Charybdis. And although the natives of that place told me many stories and advised me not to sail to the columns of Proteus but to a port of Ionia (for the latter, they said, was the course of troubled men in flight and the former of a man free from care), I choose to make for Cyprus by way of Malea and the Cyclades. There I was received by the venerable bishop Epiphanius on whose testimony you pride yourself, and I reached Antioch where I enjoyed the fellowship of the bishop



Erasmus *Eximii Hieronymi Stridonensis vita*
(Cologne: Cervicornus 1517) title-page
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and confessor Paulinus, and escorted by him in the middle of winter and in the coldest weather I entered Jerusalem. I saw many wonderful things, and what I knew formerly through the report of others my own eyes now witnessed. From there I hastened to Egypt; I inspected the monasteries of Nitria, and amidst the bands of holy men I saw asps lurking. In haste I returned immediately to my beloved Bethlehem, where I worshipped at the manger and cradle of the Saviour. I also saw the most famous lake; and I did not abandon myself to idleness and sloth, but I learned much that I did not know before.'[96] Thus far Jerome. But perhaps there will be some who think that these events belong to that first journey of Jerome to Syria. They are with greater probability, I think, to be attributed to the later journey. First, it is not very reasonable to think that when Jerome, hardly more than a youth – these are his own words – visited Syria, the most renowned bishops of that region received him with so much honour, unknown as he was and at his time of life. Secondly, his account of this trip and of his passage through Syria and Egypt is amazingly like the journey of Paula he describes in his eulogy of her.[97] One may perceive from the very narrative that Jerome at that time was her companion.

For he did not undertake the hardship of travelling through these regions out of sentiment. He was seeking in part examples of holiness from a broader range of places and in part a more thorough understanding of Holy Scripture by viewing the sites mentioned therein. He himself testifies to this in one of his prefaces.[98] Nor was it for himself that he wished to be a master of the pious life or of sacred theology. He believed that he had to spend a long time learning what he taught. He made a point of learning from many but only from the best. Moreover he embraced the learning of these men without following the contentious doctrines of certain of them. For indeed in that age in which partisanship was so rife scarcely anyone eminent for his learning escaped the suspicion of heresy. He calls Gregory of Nazianzus his teacher,[99] and he testifies that he had learned Sacred Scripture under his tutelage. But where he had studied with this man or for how long is not quite clear to me. Gregory had changed his way of life. Voluntarily giving up his bishopric and secluding himself in the country he lived the life of a monk, according to Jerome's *Catalogue of Illustrious Men*.[100] He frequently studied at Antioch in Syria under Apollinarius,[101] bishop of the church of that city, and he shared quarters with him at the urging of Paula who, I conjecture, defrayed part of the living expenses, but that was in his later years. Finally, at her instigation again, now a grizzled veteran, he went to Alexandria to put the finishing touches on his study of Sacred Scripture from association evidently with Didymus whom, though blind from childhood, he calls 'the Sighted One.'[102] Even if Rufinus charges that Jerome had enjoyed his

association with Didymus for not more than a month,[103] true as it is, the charge nevertheless is absurd. For it is not important how much time you spend with a teacher, but how much progress you make. Rufinus, though he had the advantage over Jerome in those six years he boasts of and in the many outstanding teachers he had whom Jerome did not even know by sight, nevertheless was far inferior in learning itself. Finally, availing himself of the services of Baranina the Jew, Jerome filled in and renewed what in his knowledge of Hebrew literature had either been impaired or been lost. And so now he prepared himself to deal with Holy Scripture by having gained prudence born of experience over a long period of time and by having acquired the appropriate learning through association with many of the greatest scholars. With this preparation, he was a man of the soundest judgment when he undertook the duties of a theologian. Today, however, some men totally ignorant of all the arts and lacking refinement rely on a few paltry sophisms and on a smattering of Aristotelian philosophy, and they rush into the profession of theology with unwashed feet and hands.[104]

He chose Bethlehem near the manger of his Lord as the residence of his old age. This site, already world-renowned because of its religious significance, he made even more renowned by his writings and his virtues. The town is six miles to the south of Jerusalem near the road to Hebron, and it is the city of David of the tribe of Judah. Nearby Paula founded four monasteries: three were for women, over which she herself presided; the fourth was for men, where St Jerome along with saintly and learned friends and scholarly assistants passed many years in a life no less pleasant than holy. He himself testifies to this in his eulogy of Paula,[105] who after twenty years of religious devotion at Bethlehem exchanged death for immortality. Melania, who had also gone there, came back to Rome,[106] the reason for her change of mind being uncertain. Rufinus falsely charges that she did not get along with Jerome. And it is reasonable to suppose that a disagreement occurred thanks to Rufinus. Melania defected to him and later helped the rival party. Perhaps she is the one against whom Jerome in several passages indirectly expresses his irritation, referring to her by the name 'blackness.'[107] Though Marcella herself also left the countryside of Bethlehem and returned to Rome,[108] driven by fear of the barbarians who were devastating and pillaging the whole region, nevertheless she remained most faithful to the ties of friendship, defending with the greatest spirit the party of Jerome. It was through her efforts that the Origenist faction which was gradually working its way into Rome was first exposed and suppressed.[109]

At Bethlehem Jerome devoted all his time to the sacred Psalms or to the translation of Holy Scripture[110] or to the interpretation of the sacred text, on which he lectured constantly to his brothers and sisters in the religious life.

Rufinus reproached him for having also instructed in poetry and rhetoric boys of noble families committed to his charge.[111] Jerome was so contemptuous of that reproach that he did not even dignify it with a reply. For when Paul boasts that he became all things to all men to win all for Christ, where is the disgrace if St Jerome in his desire to benefit all adapted himself to all peoples, all sexes, and all ages? Here came together from every quarter of the globe a great multitude of men to all of whom this great saint with Christian kindness extended his hospitality to the degree his resources allowed. He debarred no one from his company save those publicly branded with the mark of heresy. In short, a life highly desirable, if the insults of so many heretics and calumniators had not impaired the fruitfulness of his scholarly life. Since he had sharply attacked in his writings the errors of many there was no leading heretic who did not see in Jerome an enemy. Conscious as he was of his own shortcomings, each one feared and hated him, to cite Horace,[112] though unscathed himself but terrified by the example of others. There was never an age more prone to dissension or more confused; and all things were so contaminated by the errors and disagreements of the heretics that to remain orthodox required a considerable degree of skill.

But it was the Arian faction especially that had drawn into controversy all of the East, indeed all of the world, by writings, by force of arms, and by support of the emperors. That evil, somehow put to rest, later with a new name was reborn through the Origenists, as I said before, and in a surprising way crept into the city of Rome itself, not openly but stealthily, making its way underground, so to speak. The leader of this movement and the standard-bearer was Rufinus of Aquileia,[113] with whom Jerome had had a very close relationship when they both were boys. An extraordinary affection, I may call it, had marked their friendship. This is quite clear from the letter beginning 'In ea mihi eremi parte.'[114] But it happened as in the proverb of Aristotle that these two who had loved each other with the greatest intensity also attacked each other with the fiercest hatred.[115] After the first quarrel somehow there was a reconciliation. As a matter of fact Jerome in every way strove to prevent any suggestion of bad feeling arising even by some accident. Meanwhile he disregarded Rufinus' surreptitious scheming and poisonous detractions. But when the latter tried to bespatter his faith with the stain of heresy and associate Jerome with his own dishonour, that saintly man cried out and with total freedom rejected the words of praise which, as he himself says, smacked of artifice. Thus the imperfectly mended friendship was torn asunder again, and the tainted relationship broke out into open hostility, and all the bonds of shame and restraint were shattered. Each man raged with such wild fury against the

other that in the case of Jerome one almost confesses to the truth of the maxim of Publilius, the well-known writer of mimes: 'Patience becomes rage when too often wounded.'[116]

First, Jerome's very writings clearly reveal his impetuous and fiery nature, most humane, yes, but frank and outspoken. This nature was highly impatient of insult, but would hurt no one. Secondly, the charge is the charge of heresy, and in the matter of heresy tolerance is a wrong, not a virtue. In addition to this there was the intense provocation, of the sort capable of inflaming even the gentlest of dispositions. There are those who allow some merit to Rufinus. I however not only find his learning inadequate, but I scent a character, I think, that is venomous and sly and by no means open. Surely when Jerome paints him in such colours, always ridiculing and attacking the lack of eloquence, the inexperience, and the stupidity of the man, we must either admit that Rufinus was such a person or make Jerome a slanderer. I am more amazed therefore at what Gennadius had in mind when, not content with heaping excessive praise on Rufinus, he concludes with this remark directed, if I am not mistaken, at Jerome: 'but he [Rufinus] also replies to the disparager [Jerome] of his own minor works in two volumes, arguing convincingly that he had exercised his native talents in the service of God and for the good of the church and this with the Lord's help, and that his disparager, spurred by jealousy, had resorted to abusive language.'[117] It is clear that Rufinus in two books had attacked Jerome. There is no doubt either about Gennadius' opinion of this matter. He includes Rufinus among the outstanding Doctors of the church but makes Jerome a disparager envious of the glory of Rufinus' name. In my opinion this man of Gaul was aggrieved because Vigilantius[118] was not very gently treated by Jerome and because Palladius[119] in several passages was roughly handled. In this way he wished to take revenge.

But to return to my subject, Rufinus tried every trick against Jerome. He had suborned very many to assail a most distinguished man with their abuse, Vigilantius of Gaul, Palladius of Galatia, Magnus the orator of the city of Rome,[120] finally Domnio and Pammachius,[121] who suppressed books of Jerome to prevent them from circulating. They wrote to Jerome admonishing him to make certain revisions in his published works, especially in those in which he showed partiality in his praise of virginity and in this enthusiasm an unfair bias against marriage. For most his view was too extreme. To these critics he makes a reply which, while sparing them, sharply attacks those who in his opinion suborned them and incited their criticism.[122]

And so effective was the malicious cunning of his rivals that not even St Augustine himself, the bishop of Hippo, had, it seems, the highest opinion

of Jerome's faith until he gained a closer and more intimate acquaintance with his life and learning.[123] Augustine ought to have admired and emulated both, not to have criticized them, superior to Jerome as he was only in the dignity of the episcopate, inferior in all other gifts as well as age.[124] It was Augustine who quibbled about a falsehood,[125] it was he who wrote *De animarum origine*, it was he who uttered the insult about translating from the Hebrew, it was he who deplored the quarrel with Rufinus. He used these tactics to skirmish, as it were, against Jerome, wishing to draw out a declaration of his beliefs. Hardly an obtuse person, Jerome had some suspicion of Augustine's intentions, but for a long time he was reluctant to respond, and when finally he did, the response was rather acerbic and disagreeable. But as soon as they came to be well known to each other, united in mind and heart, they worked together to defend the Catholic faith against the attacks of the heretics. And Augustine lost some of his complacency in his attitude towards Jerome after he had come to a full realization of his greatness. He was now a disciple, no longer an inquisitor. So whatever the beginnings of their relationship, a very strong bond was created between them.

But when there had clearly developed a truceless war,[126] as they say, with Rufinus and his followers, their madness reached such intensity that they gave wide circulation to a letter of their own composition, which they ascribed to Jerome.[127] In it they have him lamenting the errors of his earlier life and condemning the effort once expended in translating Sacred Scripture from the Hebrew, as if he had been induced to do this by some Jewish imposters. But it would be all over for human society if man's power to injure matched his malice. Those mummers were not able to attain to Jerome's style, which was susceptible of imitation by no one of that age, I believe, much less by the friends of Rufinus. But if they could have achieved this, the letter would undoubtedly have been Jerome's. Further, anyone who has read Rufinus easily perceives how much poison there is in those books that he wrote against a very holy man. In addition to these books he had written a letter which apart from the most unseemly abuse contained dire threats – threats of trial, exile, even death, if he did not remain silent. Although that letter has been lost, nevertheless one may conjecture how savage it was from the *Apologia* of Jerome.[128]

From this source also we know of that very bitter quarrel he had with John, the bishop of Jerusalem,[129] to whose diocese Bethlehem belonged. On account of the quarrel he himself and his followers withdrew from communion with the bishop because the latter had incurred the clear suspicion of Arianism; he was a sycophant, cunning and slippery and insolent to a degree one might call tyrannical. Besides these irritations there

were those who bespattered him with their abuse,[130] adding their writings to incite a mind already exasperated by so many wrongs: on this side Riparius, on that Marcella, on still another Paula, Pammachius, Domnio, Oceanus, Augustine, and in addition to these very many others who enjoined: 'Clear your name, check the heresy, succour the faith.'

So it was the mind of Christ that the valour of a famous soldier when aroused by innumerable attacks begin to shine forth more brilliantly and that like gold proved by fire, tried by endless adversity, he move through good fortune and ill towards the prize of immortality. In his struggles Christ who placed him on the path of peril was at his side, and he who was destined to give the reward gave the strength. Thus like an ancient oak of great strength amid driving winds of slander from every quarter, or like the Marpesian crags pounded by waves on every side,[131] he stood with heart unconquered and unbroken. In fact he stood so firm in his adherence to principle that the more his rivals railed against him and the more offensively his haters shouted at him all the more keenly was he incited to the pursuit of holiness. Against the power of the heretics and their snares Jerome was given some help in Syria by Epiphanius[132] and by Theophilus, the bishop of Alexandria,[133] and at Rome by Marcella, Pammachius, and Chromatius,[134] strong supporters on account of Paula's relationship with him. Their good will indeed sustained him. What person would seek martyrdom in such a life – a life that was nothing else than a lasting and perpetual martyrdom? Indeed you may find those who can contemn death but cannot contemn insults.

For thirty full years he laboured hard on scriptural studies, as he himself somewhere testifies,[135] and even to extreme old age he devoted himself with youthful vigour to the work of teaching and writing. In more than one passage[136] he declares that his body was frail and that he was subject to frequent and prolonged illnesses even before he reached old age. And there should be no doubt that he brought on himself the numerous bouts with ill health because of the constant austerity of his life and especially because of his nocturnal labours, above all by his tireless application to the writing of his books. This was the reason why he was frequently forced to employ secretaries and, as he said himself, 'to rely so much on the ears and tongue in his work.'[137] His disciple and patron Paula he sent ahead to heaven; how long he survived her is not fully clear. In his eulogy of her he declares that even then he was in extreme old age.[138] Bethlehem was their home for twenty years, and after Paula's death he wrote frequently to Eustochium, the heir indeed of her mother's holiness and learning as well as of her kindness towards Jerome.

Finally, after his life had run its fruitful course he was summoned in the

ninety-first year of his life to the crown of immortality.[139] This was in the four hundred and twenty-second year of man's salvation, in the reign of Honorius and Constantius, who at that time jointly ruled the Empire. It is reported that his bones were later brought to Rome. Indeed even today a monument to him is to be seen on the Esquiline in the church of the Virgin Mother close to the manger of Christ.[140] He who wrote his life under the name of Cyril not without wit invented the story that Jerome when close to death had predicted that he would some day return to Rome.[141]

I find it distasteful to say anything at all about his miracles, which are widely known, whatever the pleasure this kind of tale gives to some. Further, it is not very important whether the account is true or not that Jerome arranged the order of the divine office and added two versicles at the end of each psalm.[142] One thing is clear, the letter that testifies that he did this was a fabrication by a worthless fellow using a false name.

His blameless life, but especially his writings, which reveal inimitable learning and an eloquence that matched this learning, won him great fame and influence. As a result even learned Greece, accustomed to disdain the literature of every other nation, had the commentaries of Jerome alone translated into her language.[143] After producing so many distinguished writers, the perennial teacher of the entire world was not ashamed to learn from a man from Dalmatia. And now there would be a stream of people from everywhere to the cave at Bethlehem, as if to a universal oracle of the whole Christian world, if any matter in Holy Scripture perplexed anyone. Frequent letters, frequent messengers came and went, from Italy, from Spain, from Gaul, from far off Germany, from Africa. He was consulted by bishops, by noble matrons, by people of the first rank. Whoever had resolved upon a Christian life would first petition him for the rule to guide this way of life. Many were drawn to Syria not so much by the sacredness of the place as by a thirst to see Jerome. Surely there was pleasure in looking upon the outer covering and dwelling place of that holy and celestial mind, the sight of which in his works stirred their veneration. In addition to many others Alypius visited him,[144] at the bidding of Augustine, who wished to embrace Jerome at least through his dearest friend as intermediary, for indeed, although he would have liked to, Augustine was not free to make so long a journey. Paulus Orosius the historian visited him,[145] sent also by Augustine, I think, as Orosius indicates at the end of his history, where he recalls some things he had learned from his conversation with Jerome. Sulpicius Severus, who gives us a magnificent eulogy of Jerome, without however receiving his just deserts from the saint, also paid him a visit.[146] Apodemius came from Gaul to see him.[147] There were also many others whom Jerome recalls in his writings.

I am aware of course that some vehemently maintain that Jerome's virginity was unimpaired. I do not see what purpose is served in asserting this view when he himself in two passages openly and candidly admits that he had stumbled in his youth and had forfeited praise on this score. First, in the letter beginning 'Quod ad te hucusque non scripsi' he testifies in these words: 'I praise virginity to the skies not because I have it but because I admire more what I do not have. It is a noble and modest admission to praise in others what you yourself are lacking. Do I not admire the flight of the birds because I cling to the earth burdened by the weight of the body? And do I not praise the dove because "she sweeps along her liquid way and does not move her swift wings"?'[148] Thus Jerome. I am not unaware that some understand this passage to mean that in denying himself credit for virginity Jerome is abasing himself out of modesty. This is comparable to Paul who, though his labours were without parallel, still calls himself the least of the apostles and unworthy of that name. And yet this manner of speaking perhaps may be appropriate in another context. But in this context it would have been foolish for him to make this statement, since it would have thwarted his purpose. For when he had extolled virginity to the point of incurring odium he was bent on meeting the false charges of certain people who kept insisting: 'Everyone praises the qualities he has himself.' Those who are married take pleasure in praising matrimony, and given the licence they would like to make it the first of all the sacraments. Monks praise their own rule. Priests and bishops are glad to hear about the excellence of their own ministry. The one who lives by the precept of virginity rejoices that this state is equated with the purity of the angels. And this is not to promote virtue but is an exercise in self-praise and an attempt to wrap oneself in the cloak of righteousness. Therefore to prevent accusations of this kind from impairing his credibility in commending virginity he makes the candid admission that he is not what he praises and is not pleading his own case but is defending the truth. Again, in the letter beginning 'Non debet charta' he gives expression to the same idea in these words 'You know yourselves the slippery path of youth, on which I too stumbled and you passed over not without fear.'[149]

Besides, those who bring up to me the passage from the letter to Eustochium, 'We not only praise virginity, we preserve it,'[150] little appreciate Jerome's meaning there. He wrote an essay on guarding virginity: he therefore shows to the virgin what she ought to expect from this tract, certainly not the praise of virginity, which he says many have handled with taste and eloquence, but the justification for preserving its integrity. And it is not an unusual turn of speech to say that he who teaches how chastity can be preserved does preserve another's. As Virgil has said, 'And he raises

them from the ground as lofty alders,'[151] similarly Jerome has said in the letter to Paulinus that is an introduction to the study of Sacred Scripture, 'Haggai builds the temple that had been destroyed.'[152] Otherwise the meaning that those critics adduce does not accord either with what precedes or with what follows. Nevertheless in the passage quoted above I suspect that Jerome had written 'now' instead of 'only.'[153]

But if we can have devotion only to a virgin, our devotion will exclude some apostles and the patriarchs. There is, however, in certain men a kind of zeal, to all appearances holy but yet absurd, to lavish unstinting praise on the saints, endowing them not with qualities they had but with qualities they wish they had. These men, were it possible, would wish to make Christ greater than he is. Then they would make Mary almost equal to him. In a partisan spirit each exalts his own saint. To the Friars Minor Francis is never praised enough, to others Benedict, to still others Augustine. But it is also advantageous frequently to acknowledge in the saints some blemish like a scar.[154] Somehow it happens that greater influence is exerted on us by the example of those whose lot it has been to experience a conversion to holiness from a life of sin. How many more have been won over to a life of virtue by that notorious sinner Mary Magdalene, the joy of Christ, than by Tecla's perpetual innocence, which has been the portion of scarcely a soul?[155] David's lamentations over his sins and his instruction to us to reform after our mistakes have been of greater benefit to mankind than the ever-flawless life of others.

Jerome had his lapses, but he had them in those early years and, I think, before he had been reborn in Christ through baptism. People at that time of course were not generally baptized until they were virtually adults unless a threat to life required it. These lapses derived from that vice in which youth is rather generally ensnarled before an awareness of its sinfulness has come. But what penalties he exacted from himself because of his youthful offence, and for how many years! By what punishments did he avenge that bit of youthful pleasure! Those who prize virginity should cherish Jerome's celebration of it. Jerome's example should be followed by those who wish to make white the somewhat stained robe of baptism through the cleansing power of penance, and far more by those who have devoted the greatest part of their lives to base pleasures.

Further, there are those to whom the sharpness of his language gives offence because in his writings his anger sometimes seems to flare up with an intensity exceeding the counsels of Christian forbearance, and in his biting attack on many he clearly seems to recall something of the spirit of Old Comedy. This opinion Augustine once shared and in our time Francesco Filelfo,[156] heaven forgive me, a scholar of stature indeed but sometimes

betraying too high an opinion of himself. But these critics in my opinion do not give enough attention to the circumstances of the particular case – native land, natural disposition, self-reliance, the unscrupulousness of rivals, an intolerable kind of contumely – or finally to that well-known remark in Terence: 'If you were I your opinion would be different.'[157] No one bears an affront to himself more intemperately than the person who regards an affront to another most phlegmatically. Jerome's attack on Rufinus was harsh, but Rufinus had deserved a harsher attack. Jerome repels the charge of heresy with courage; his opponent threatens execution and assails his reputation with false charges of shameful acts. And no one's fury is more telling than that of a man to whom gentleness was denied. And yet if anyone should give a more attentive and closer examination to those books in which he moves against his enemies with might and main and freely spreads out all his sail, as they say,[158] he will detect wonderful traces of a very gentle and mild disposition. He is often playful and pleads his case more with jovial than with venomous wit. He made some concessions to the spirit of his age and the feelings of his friends; and he repels a charge against himself in a manner designed to spare his enemy, if possible. Purposely and discreetly he suppresses much, preferring to follow a sense of Christian decency rather than his exasperated feelings. An example is his letter against John of Jerusalem.[159] In his self-restraint how great a concession does he make to his own sensibilities, how great a concession to the rank of bishop! And if it is a matter involving something more abhorrent, he often suppresses names. Sometimes he uses fictitious names, as in the story about the reconciliation of mother and daughter[160] and in the case of the unchaste deacon and in the case of the erring Susanna.[161] In fact the anger he felt against Rufinus and his friends he expresses through the fictitious or obscure names of Grunnius, Luscius Lavinius, Calpurnius Lanarius, Scorpius, Canis Alpinus, and others of that kind.[162]

Moreover it is painful even to remember the daily growling we hear from some wickedly religious and stupidly learned men who belittle in Jerome what is the finest thing about him. I refer of course to his extravagant learning, as they term it themselves, and to his eloquence, which to them is somewhat more than befits a theologian. They know nothing at all about Jerome except that he was pronounced a Ciceronian and scourged.[163] But with regard to this, since a full reply was made by the most learned men Lorenzo Valla and Angelo Poliziano,[164] and since I too once in my youth when less than twenty years of age disported myself against the folly of those men in the dialogue entitled *Antibarbari*,[165] I will add here only this one comment. When he was discouraging a young girl from the inordinate study of profane books Jerome says it was not a dream but that upon awakening he

found his shoulders black and blue. In his reply to Rufinus, however, he is somewhat amused at the diligence of a man for whom it was not enough to observe what a person says or does during his waking hours but even what he dreams about in his sleep. And he confesses that it was a dream comparable to those strange and amusing events of the night in which he sometimes saw himself take wing and fly with Daedalus over the seas; and sometimes in these dreams his hair was neatly curled (whereas he was bald), and occasionally dressed in a toga he made speeches at the rostrum in the Forum.[166]

Therefore let those people explain how both accounts can be true at the same time, or let them choose which version of Jerome's they prefer to accept. Is it to be that version in which it is not a question of the literal truth of the narrative but of a means of cautioning a very young maiden, or is it to be that version in which a case is argued and a charge repelled about a matter where the truth of a statement is usually determined also by an oath? Thus it was with a fiction that Pythagoras deterred ignorant men from the eating of meat;[167] so too parents sometimes threaten their children with fictitious hobgoblins to keep them from wrongdoing. Besides, they have to decide whether they prefer to believe an old man or a youth. It was not a dream, wrote the youth; it was a dream, wrote the old man. If it were an actual experience, that is a vision, not an empty dream, why does he compare it to the nonsensical events of the usual dreams? Why does he scoff at Rufinus when the latter raises it as an objection?[168] Or let them explain this difficulty. In the presence of the tribunal he said: 'If ever in the future I have secular books in my possession, I have denied you.'[169] Why then does not Jerome refute Rufinus' objection about the dialogues of Cicero which at great expense he had arranged to be copied for the brothers or the objection about the poets whom he lectured on to boys?[170] And his treatment of this count of the accusation is more in the nature of sport than of serious refutation; doubtless he deems the charge more deserving of ridicule than of rebuttal. Where then does Jerome deny that he had secular books or hide the fact? Or if he had denied it, what sane man would have believed him? Unless perchance we think it reasonable that when in his treatise about the best kind of translation[171] he recalls word for word very many lines from Cicero he drew upon the memory of his youth for all these lines, not upon a manuscript of Cicero's work.

Finally, if it is a chargeable offence to have secular books and if a reader of such works has denied Christ, why was Jerome the only one to be flogged for this? Why today in the schools of theology does Aristotle enjoy higher esteem than Paul or Peter? But more than enough has already been said on this childish and ridiculous subject. I at least, to conclude, would prefer to be

flogged with Jerome than to be anointed with honey in the company of those who obviously are so terrified by the dream of Jerome that they very piously abstain from all classical literature – without, however, abstaining from the vices of the authors whose books out of scrupulosity they do not dare to open.

On the other hand, there are some whose arrogance in thinking that they are more than ordinary theologians is matched by their impiety in denying that title to Jerome: first because his writing does not display enough theological jargon, which the theologians say is the prime quality of their discipline; secondly because nowhere does it display the cleverness of Capreolus, Alexander, Egidio, and Scotus,[172] nor anywhere does he draw theological conclusions – marvels, of course, of rhythm and harmony; because he does not rattle off majors and minors; because nowhere does he play the fool with sophistical subtleties and juvenile quibbles; because he does not anxiously rack his brain with paltry questions; because he does not cram the Philosopher[173] indiscriminately into his work. But in this matter at least it would be right to excuse Jerome. How could this good man have surmised that this new breed of theologian would be born into the Christian world? He had found nothing like it either in Scripture or in the writings of the apostles or in their most learned interpreters, especially when he had learned from Paul that trivial questions that are good for nothing save the destruction of piety are to be avoided.[174] Who could have foreseen that there would be those who would unravel all theology from top to bottom, as they say, and turn a sacred discipline into something Sophistic or Thomistic or Scotistic or Occamistic?[175] And yet if for these reasons they do not admit Jerome into the honoured company of theologians they will not admit even Paul or Peter or anyone at all who had lived before the last four hundred years. What a wretched age that was! What a disaster for the Christian world to have been without theologians for more than a thousand years! Especially since in those times the Christian religion had reached its farthest limits but is now confined to a narrow compass, and especially since it was necessary to refute a throng of so many learned heretics by books of substance, not by worthless tracts. There is no one with classical training who will deny that one may gain twice over the title of 'Our Master'[176] with less application to study than it takes to match the style of Jerome.

He was exceptionally fluent in many languages. Passing over the many ancillary disciplines without which one must wander aimlessly in biblical studies, let me ask this question: Who ever drew Sacred Scripture from the sources themselves as he did? Who drank more deeply? Whose diligence in study was comparable? Who was as ready and as girded for action, as they say? Who cited Scripture with greater frequency and propriety? Whose

exegesis was more learned? Who handled Scripture with greater piety and felicity? Who read more attentively those very erudite interpreters? Who refuted the doctrines of the heretics more effectively? Who had a more thorough knowledge of the philosophy of Christ? Who expressed it more forcefully in his writings or in his life? Are these, I ask you, the hallmarks of a theologian or not? Or will he be refused the name of theologian simply because he does not stammer as we do, not to say play the fool? Or will he be ranked with the grammarians, and while Scotists fulminate from their thrones on high will Jerome be sitting at their feet in the lowest benches? And this because he preferred to give utterance to divine truth rather than to human nonsense, because he preferred to walk amid Scripture's verdant meadows rather than to struggle through the spiny thickets of these modern theologians, because he did not confuse everything with the most frigid of distinctions, but like a river of gold, as it were, he preferred to flow on carrying downstream with him much of value. A single word often does the work of a complete syllogism. Surely, he is not keen enough because we fail to grasp his keenness? He treated those questions which were then under discussion in churches and synods, and his treatment of these issues was unsurpassed in eloquence, in energy, and in theology. He never imagined that those who did not use in their argumentation 'formalities,' 'instances,' 'quiddities,' 'ecceities,' and other subtleties of that ilk ought to be debarred from the holy rites of the theologians.

It is worth while listening to the opinion of that learned crowd which reduces everything to a set number. It was an attractive idea to have four Doctors of the church and likewise four senses of Holy Scripture,[177] to correspond of course with the four evangelists. To Gregory they assign tropology, to Ambrose allegory, to Augustine anagogy, and to Jerome, to assign him something, they leave the literal and grammatical sense. For this is how they divide these terms, though Jerome makes no distinction between the first three. First from so many distinguished doctors they wanted only four to be so designated. This they did from a kind of fairness rather than from their heart, to prevent the suspicion that they found none of the ancient Fathers acceptable; and yet they do not even read these writers at all except as examples of the apocryphal and long since obsolete. They generously accord some recognition to them, reserving the verities however for themselves. I would like very much to compare in a few words those who feel this way about Jerome with Jerome, but I will keep myself in check. I do not want honest theologians to think that my remarks about those wretched fellows will have been directed against themselves. But this one thing I cannot leave unsaid: Jerome has proved his worth by his many published works. If any one of those dolts could understand a single volume of Jerome

on his own, if forty theologians of that party by common effort and concerted scholarship could hammer out one little book in any way worthy of comparison with Jerome's works, even with those Jerome dictated but did not write out, we will confess that Jerome is not a theologian.

But I am not at all amazed at the judgment of those people since it would be more amazing if they approved of what they neither have learned nor understand. I have greater justification in feeling resentment against those who though dedicated to classical letters make pronouncements about so great a man that are not very fair, not to say arrogant. Francesco Filelfo, taking on the role of critic, bestows on Augustine the prize for dialectics and on Jerome the prize for eloquence.[178] It is not my purpose to diminish in any way the attainments of Augustine, but the facts themselves proclaim that Jerome surpassed Augustine in dialectics no less than he outstripped him in eloquence and that he was no less Augustine's superior in learning than he was in excellence of style. Indeed Jerome, who had a thorough knowledge of the Greek language, had read not only all of Aristotle but also all the other philosophers, but Augustine – and this even he himself admits and his works show – read only two tracts of Aristotle that at the time happened to be available in a Latin translation, *De praedicamentis* and *De enunciatione*. And, to be frank, Augustine presents his arguments in a style that is rather obscure and laboured; but how much more condensed is Jerome, how different his vigour! Each is admirable, I think, in his own special talent, but Jerome shows up to better advantage in eloquence, Augustine in dialectics.[179] Yet I do not agree fully with Filelfo's opinion about the kind of life they led. Jerome was harder on himself than Augustine was on himself, and towards others he was more lenient; and never did Jerome demand of his companions what Augustine demanded of his clerics. But it is better to forego a comparison between the two outstanding men of the Latin church for whose pre-eminent virtues it is more fitting to thank God than to stir up controversy between their adherents.[180]

Moreover it is amazing how wide a currency among scholars, especially in Italy, was given to Theodorus Gaza's well-known remark,[181] which breathes the spirit of pure Attic wit. When Bessarion of Nicaea,[182] in his presence and the presence also of Plethon of Byzantium,[183] assigned primacy in eloquence to Jerome, even using the argument ironically that Jerome had been accused of being a Ciceronian, Gaza responded that Jerome had been beaten unjustly, doubtless implying that he was not Ciceronian enough. But whether or not Gaza made this offhand remark among friends is not so very important. Indeed to this man I give more credit in literary matters than to practically anyone else; nor does the integrity which I understand him to have allow me to believe that he made that

remark. In any case not even to Gaza in view of his Greek origin would I concede the role of critic of Jerome's eloquence. He was also quite unfair to Cicero, and that more because of ethnic bias than of critical judgment.

I am amazed that a story at once unkind and foolish has gained such acceptance among the learned, especially since Pietro Crinito, an authority of no great importance, relates it. First, his account is so dull that he deserves to be told forthwith: 'Crinito, if you were not making up the story, you wouldn't be telling it the way you do.' Secondly, his account is so untrustworthy that like the shrew-mouse he gives himself away by his own voice. He makes clear that he neither had read nor understands his story, which he had heard somewhere, I think, either in the market-place or in a tavern. This is neither the time nor the place to give a full evaluation of Crinito's writings and judgment. Surely his books testify that the man was by no means dissatisfied with himself and had plenty of time for literary activity – time he could have used more suitably and more responsibly. The details of this story I will set forth in a few words. 'There is,' Crinito says, 'a frequently heard remark of Theodorus Gaza about St Jerome and his learning that Rufinus had done him an injustice by accusing him of being a Ciceronian.' And a little later he strikes again (this was fair, I suppose) and drives home the same point. 'Bessarion,' he writes [quoting Gaza], 'besides this notorious wrong inflicted on Jerome by Rufinus he also bore those stripes without deserving them.' I would be astounded if Crinito had read the story of the dream, whether in the version narrated by Jerome in the letter to Eustochium or in the accusation made by Rufinus or again in the version offered by Jerome in which he plays down the incident and treats it humorously. For when Jerome himself testifies that he had been scourged for being a Ciceronian and not a Christian what was that dreadful wrong Rufinus inflicted on Jerome? The source and witness of the story is Jerome himself, God the source of the blows. And the blows are not the issue in Rufinus' charge but rather Jerome's failure to keep the oath by which he had sworn never again to possess profane books: he had not fulfilled that pledge he had solemnly sworn to keep before the tribunal of the eternal Judge. If he was falsely accused of being a Ciceronian, if he was struck by blows without justification, it would be right to call God, the judge, to the bar of justice, not Rufinus. By Jove, what beautiful wit, the kind that attests to Attic genius and that scholars vie with one another to applaud!

Further, among many other things that I prudently disregard so as not to weary the reader, though I could rightly censure them, Crinito writes as follows: 'Since his eloquence also was too studied, he was considered a Ciceronian and so accused.'[184] What are you saying, Crinito? Is the eloquence of Cicero so studied when a special quality of it in the judgment of

Quintilian is that happy fluency of expression? Now I am not unaware that Crinito had a different opinion from the one he has actually expressed. It is that this accusation was made against Jerome because his pursuit of eloquence was excessive. But where indeed is that well-known purity of Roman speech here? What person acquainted with Roman usage speaks in this way: 'He was thought to be of the studied kingdom.' And then he adds the statement of Theodorus, which is said to have provoked laughter, since even in the matter of Roman eloquence he was a very penetrating critic. What do I hear? It is not the role of a very penetrating critic to provoke laughter, is it? But Crinito felt the laughter had been directed against Jerome. And this I almost divined myself. But is this in the Roman character, to play with trifles of this sort? And yet this writer is such a stranger to Roman eloquence as to display no purity of style either. Listen to this pronouncement on Jerome. Note that the self-importance and arrogance are so strong that you would think a Varro is speaking, not a Pietro Crinito. 'I would not absolutely deny,' he declares, 'that there are certain features in Jerome which do not everywhere demonstrate Roman purity and grace of style. This fault indeed, if it is a fault, must be ascribed, I think, not to the man but to his time and his calling. For among Christians faults in one's life, not in eloquence, are the targets of reproach.' What an outstanding advocate Jerome has here!

What, I ask, is that Roman purity?[185] It is not to use the language the same way Caesar and Cicero did, is it? But how was it possible for Jerome, dealing as he does with themes that were very different, to use the same vocabulary? The religion is different, the manner of life is different, the authors are not the same, everything is changed. And will you deny eloquence to me unless I speak just as if I were living in the age of Cicero, even though aptness in the use of language is a special merit? Or unless by chance I shall not seem Roman enough if instead of using the old expression, 'faxit Iuppiter optimus maximus,' I shall say 'faxit Christus Iesus,' since the latter is not found in Varro or Caesar or Cicero. Now what is this fault that somebody says should be attributed to Jerome's time? He doesn't think, does he, that this age is more eloquent than that one? Or what is that calling to which he wants to assign a lack of eloquence? For he is not such a simpleton, I think, as to believe that Jerome was the kind of monk we accept today. Is the profession of Christ at odds with eloquence? If Cicero speaks eloquently about his gods, what prevents a Christian from also speaking eloquently about holiness and true religion? I am reluctant to say – it is something however I have found to be absolutely true – that there are very many so devoted to pagan literature that wherever they see words of a Christian character they see a lack of learning, maturity, and quality. They

find pleasure in names like Romulus, Camillus, Fabricius, and Julius; the names of Christ, Paul, Peter, and Bartholomew nauseate them. Nothing else in Jerome gives offence to them save his frank Christianity. But as for us, if we ever wish to appear eloquent, good Lord, how profane is the language we use about sacred things! And indeed I would not approve in a Christian the anxious pursuit of eloquence, which never had the approval of the philosophers or of Seneca or of any serious person. And in writing about religion it is not even possible to avoid using the witness of Holy Scripture, and it would be absurd to alter its language and wicked to disdain it.

Moreover one is sometimes compelled to cite those who lacked elegance of style. In this class we include Bonaventure, Thomas, and Scotus; Jerome includes Jovinianus, Vigilantius, and Rufinus. They say that Pomponius Laetus throughout his entire life remained aloof from Greek literature to prevent any foreign influence from contaminating the purity of his Roman speech.[186] On the other hand St Jerome devoted his time and effort to gain mastery of many languages. In addition he dealt with subjects that do not easily lend themselves to embellishment or take on rhetorical brilliance, and he even dictated a great deal. Despite this his eloquence proved to be of such high quality that there has been no one in our memory with whom we can compare him in this regard. And yet our age has seen outstanding men who would not have been deemed lacking in eloquence even in the time of Cicero. Chief among them are Lorenzo Valla,[187] Ermolao Barbaro,[188] Angelo Poliziano, Giovanni Pico,[189] and our own Rodolphus Agricola.[190] There are others also whom I by no means contemn, but since these are the distinguished ones they will serve as the standard of appraisal. Jerome to some extent despised eloquence; his attention was drawn in different directions by many studies which generally rust over the polished surface of style. These men throughout their entire lives were engaged only in those literary activities which contribute to the embellishment of style. But given the same subject-matter, given the same rules of Christian speech, we shall see that not even one of them attains the eloquence of Jerome. For first since the chief element and, as Horace says, source of eloquence is thorough knowledge of the subject-matter you are going to deal with,[191] who does not immediately understand in how many respects Jerome excels?

Besides, who composes a more skilful exordium? Who states his proposition more perfectly? Whose narration is clearer? Whose digressions are more delightful or more appropriate? Who is more vigorously concise? Who hurls his spear into an adversary with greater penetration or when struck responds more admirably? Who has the more tenacious grip? Who in treating the dispositions that the Greeks view as moral traits is more appealing? Who in arousing the dispositions that the Greeks call passions is

more effective?[192] Whose figures of speech are more exuberant or more graphic? Who weaves in the more suitable maxims? Whose exclamations have the keener sting? Whose sketches have the greater accuracy? Who exalts more splendidly or depresses more abjectly? How great is his plan of organization! What judgment he has! What pleasure there is in his transitions, which he often achieves with a sentence! How ready is the abundance of his Latin expression! What emphasis in language! What selectivity! What wealth of content! What a marshalling of authorities! How densely packed he is everywhere! How he presses on! How felicitous is the blend where he weaves together, arranges, and designs everything! Moreover what force, what strength, what energy, what movement and life there is in his use of language! What a wonder that he nowhere rests, nowhere sleeps, nowhere stops, nowhere stands still! How he hastens everywhere and carries the reader with him! How he always links one idea to another, and how jewel follows jewel! How musical, how rhythmical is the arrangement of all he writes, how marvellously his speech rolls on and makes its circuit with phrase and clause! What shall I say of the humour with which he wonderfully seasons even the saddest themes? Finally, what courage, what confidence he shows in his cause! Who instructs more clearly? Who delights more urbanely? Who stirs the emotions more effectively? Whose praises ring more sincerely? Whose persuasive power is greater? Whose exhortations are more impassioned? Whose narrative is more sublime? Whose teaching is more devout? Whose conversation with friends is more civilized? For there is no kind of subject with which he has not had some experience, and everywhere he is himself. These qualities may not completely capture the admiration of some, since they have never entered this arena.

But it is characteristic of great power to handle sacred subjects with such splendour, simple ones with such learning, crude ones with such refinement, abstruse ones with such clarity, those far from everyday experience in so popular a way, dangerous ones so boldly, and austere ones so pleasantly. It is one thing to write a letter with Cicero as the model and to play the ape with ten selected words from Cicero; it is another thing to compose so many books on the most serious subjects. It is one thing to declaim in petty and artificial debates; it is another on serious questions of faith to satisfy both those who look for nothing save the knowledge of Holy Scripture and those who look only for intellectual power. And he who shows this ability, is he not Ciceronian enough? Indeed what else is it to be Ciceronian than to use language in the best way even if one should use it differently? For indeed Cicero himself would have had to change his language if he were Jerome. The good qualities of style you admire in one

author may be different from those you admire in another. Upon one person, Jerome, so many gifts were lavished at the same time that you find in him what you miss even in Cicero. Cicero speaks; Jerome thunders and fulminates. We admire the former's language; we admire the latter's heart as well.

Furthermore, although our age has seen a revival of literary studies that is quite auspicious, yet the practice of declamation is entirely extinct. Thus only a very few are qualified to make a judgment about the nature of eloquence itself, since the basis for doing so is practice, not precept. Just as, according to the Greek proverb, one swallow does not make a spring,[193] so no one single gift makes a person eloquent. Among the many outstanding authors who have lent their natural talent to the defence and elucidation of Christ's religion some lack a knowledge of secular literature and others of Holy Scripture. In one author Jerome misses natural talent, in another clarity of expression, in this one forcefulness, in that one brilliance. Many have lacked the knowledge of languages, some purity of faith, and certain ones integrity of life. Jerome and Jerome alone has exhibited all these qualifications. Consequently if you should be looking not for some one virtue but for the harmony and fullness of them all, even Greece herself, I would say boldly yet truthfully, has no one to compare with our Jerome. Let her put forward a rival if she can, and I shall not be unwilling to recant.

And yet even the mediocre have no qualms about calumniating this man, whom not even the greatest can match. Lorenzo Valla observes that Jerome in his work against Jovinianus mentions Jupiter Stator as if he is so called from the verb *sto* and not from *sisto*.[194] It is as if Jerome's purpose in this passage was to trace the origin of the epithet Jupiter Stator and not instead to seek the opportunity to laugh at Jovinianus. Unless perhaps when Martial writes: 'We will say 'figs,' which we know grow on a tree; we will say 'figs,' Caecilianus, which are yours,'[195] he is well aware that these are different words. Nevertheless, whether Stator is derived from *sisto* or from *sto* there is no reason to criticize Jerome. For what else does *sisto* mean than 'to make stand'? In Greek the one word ἵστημι expresses both meanings, but in Latin two different words are used, which, however, are cognate. Therefore when Jupiter is Stator it seems to offend the person who enjoys sitting. And this affinity of words and ideas, such as it is, was enough to cause laughter.

But a much greater degree of insolence marks Filippo Beroaldo's censure of Jerome for reproving Rufinus because he used the word *comparo* instead of *emo*.[196] 'Hence it is,' he says, 'that I am surprised that Jerome reviled Rufinus with excessive vehemence, not to say hostility.' Rather it is you, Beroaldo, who display excessive insolence, not to say ineptitude, in assailing a man far your superior in morality and learning. Today indeed the

Italians use the verb *comparo* instead of *emo*, and that the misuse of the word had already started in the time of Jerome is indicated not only by the passage in Rufinus but also by Sophronius in the *Catalogue of Illustrious Writers* where he translates Jerome's use of *comparo* by the Greek word 'to buy.'[197] But Beroaldo's citations from Cato do not even to a slight degree militate against Jerome. For not even if a farm which is bought is correctly said 'to be acquired' is there necessarily no difference between the two words. For the verb 'to acquire' has a broader extension, including, to be sure, everything that is obtained whatever the manner, whether by gift or work or purchase or war or force or finally theft. But Rufinus had used that word *comparo* in such a way that it could mean nothing else than 'to buy.' But let us concede that *comparo* is found in place of *emo*. What need was there to heap abuse on Jerome, as if even Cicero does not ridicule certain usages in Antony which are found in the most highly regarded authors, or as if Rufinus makes a grammatical error in only one place? But Beroaldo's strictures perhaps could have been excused on the grounds of youthful fervour, since he wrote his commentaries on Suetonius, I believe, in his early years.

In his commentaries on the *Golden Ass* of Apuleius, however, which he published in his old age, he again strikes out at Jerome for using the expression 'a woolly garment' to describe one that is worn out and of little value, whereas Horace has used it to denote a new and elegant one.[198] It is not my purpose to expend too much effort on trifles of this sort, but first, let me say, in this passage Jerome is not explaining the meaning of Horace or even alluding too clearly to the poet's words. And to begin with I would not concede to Beroaldo that a woolly garment is beautiful and elegant. On the contrary it is more likely that the garment was the kind that has a shaggy nap and is not made of sheared wool. But an undertunic with a worn nap is quite different from a woolly tunic. And Jerome did not oppose a woolly tunic and a black undertunic to a new and elegant one but to the linen, silken, and white garments that were then favoured luxuries. So much so that in the age of Pliny, imported as these materials were from barbarian lands, they were hardly considered suitable for Roman men, and several emperors were discredited for wearing garments of pure silk. Jerome's very words makes this clear: 'Then you were wearing a woolly tunic and a black undertunic, your clothes were soiled and you were pallid, and your hands were calloused by hard work; now you go about decked out in garments of linen and silk and in the raiment of Artois and Laodicea.' Accordingly a woolly garment whether new or old or cheap or costly is certainly made of wool. But silk and linen are not wool and are especially recommended for their whiteness. And although today wearing linen garments is not costly and is very common, nevertheless it once was the mark of a noble; and it was first

allowed priests out of respect for their office, and therefore no monks were permitted such attire except when performing the sacred mysteries.

As for the criticisms of Battista Pio that in the first psalm Jerome should have translated a Hebrew word by 'needle' or 'stalk,' not by 'dust,' and that in Jeremiah a Hebrew term actually means 'hired woman mourners,' not simply 'women who bewail,'[199] I consider them completely undeserving of any refutation, though I am far from thinking that Jerome's translations cannot be defended. I can scarcely bring myself to say how unwillingly I would stoop to refute this criticism. I could have responded with the old adage that the eagle does not see flies,[200] but I wanted to show in a few words that Jerome, a most learned man from whatever point of view, did not escape criticism even in these trifles.

Till now Jerome has laboured under a disadvantage – as he was not read by very many, so he was understood by very few. Moreover we admit that the well-known saying of an eminent painter is true: a person will find fault more quickly than he will imitate. But henceforth, when throughout the entire Christian world the study of classical literature has revived and not a few men of talent and of great promise have begun to awaken to that old and genuine theology, we all may embrace a Jerome reborn, as it were, in our common studies; and each individual may claim him as his very own. At one time seven cities vied with one another in laying claim to Homer. But by virtue of residence Dalmatia on one side may appropriate Jerome, Pannonia on another, and Italy on still another. Stridon may congratulate herself for having produced so brilliant a light for the world. Italy may congratulate herself on three counts: first because she educated him, then because through baptism she gave birth to him in Christ, lastly because she possesses the pledge of his most holy body. The provinces of Gaul may recognize him as their own; he travelled through all of them, and he instructed them in numerous books expressly dedicated to them. Spaniards may claim him for themselves whom he made renowned by the several letters he wrote to them. Germany may show her affection for him who by a single work gave to her instruction and fame enough. Greece may embrace him on two counts: first because of the language they shared, secondly because as teacher of the world she in turn was aided by his writings. Egypt may embrace him – a land he so often visited and which to our advantage made a very learned man more learned. Arabs and Saracens may clasp him in their embrace who brought them fame by his residence near them. Hebrews may cherish him whose language and literature he mastered by such great effort. All of Syria indeed may appropriate him – the land in which he spent a great part of his life; but especially Bethlehem, twice most fortunate, for in that town Christ was born for the world and in the same

town Jerome for heaven. Let each sex and each age study him, read him, drink him in. There is no kind of teaching which cannot use his support, no way of life which may not be formed by his precepts. Let only the heretics abhor and hate Jerome. They were the only ones he always considered the bitterest of enemies.

PREFACES TO VOLUME II
OF ERASMUS' EDITION OF ST JEROME

Aside from the dedicatory letter to Archbishop Warham, which serves as a general preface to the entire *Opera*, the three prefaces translated here are the longest and most substantial in the edition. The first two are prefaces to the first and third parts of volume II in the 1516 edition (volume IV in the later editions), the volume reserved for *spuria* and the writings of others that have a connection with Jerome's works. In the threefold division of this volume, the first part contains *spuria* worth reading, the third worthless trash wrongly ascribed to Jerome. Erasmus expatiates in the prefaces on the matter of false attributions and castigates the 'imposter' who dared ascribe his 'insipid blather' to the saint. The wide ranging (though somewhat rambling and repetitious) discussion contains much of great interest, for example a substantial discourse in the first preface on style and its importance in identifying an author – *le style est l'homme-même*. The third preface included here introduces volume II of the revised 1524 edition, the volume that now contained Jerome's polemical and apologetic works. It is an expansion of the preface to volume III in the 1516 edition, all of which it includes, and is an explanation and defence of Jerome's often excessive vehemence in his writings against heretics and other opponents.

The first preface is in HO II 2–4 verso, the second in HO II 189–191 verso. Two excerpts from the latter are published as Ep 326 in Allen and CWE. The third preface appears as Ep 1451 in Allen and CWE.

TOMVS SECVNDVS

IN CVIVS
PRIMA PARTE REPERIES
ERVDITA QVAEDAM,
SED HACTENVS
FALSO INSCRIPTA HIERONYMO.
IN
SECVNDA, ALIENA, SED SVIS
QVAE QVE TITVLIS AVTHOREM TESTANTIA.
IN
TERTIA, LECTV PRORSVS INDIGNA, ET IMPVDENTER
ATTRIBVTA DOCTIS
VIRIS.
QVAE TAMEN ADIVNXIMVS, NE
QVID AMPVTASSE VIDEAR
REMVR AEDITIONI
IAM RECEPTAE.

BASILEAE.
M. D. XVI.

Hieronymi opera II (Basel: Froben 1516) title-page
Öffentliche Bibliothek, University of Basel

ERASMVS ROTERODAMVS DIVINARVM LITTE RARVM STVDIOSIS OMNIBVS S. D.

Vperiore Tomo παραινετικὰ, quæq; ad uitæ ptinẽt institutionẽ, quo licuit ordine digessimus, simul uelut eodem fasce complexi, ἐγκωμιαστικὰ, παραμυθητικὰ, νουθετικὰ, καὶ ἱσορικὰ, hoc est, quæ ad laudem, consolationem, obiurgationem pertinent, & rei gestæ narrationem habent, intermixtis & familiaribus aliquot epistolis: quibus omnibus ideo dedimus idem uolumen, quod hæc ita commiscuit ipse Hieronymus, ut non queant diuelli commode, & idem pariter agit in omnibus, in hoc laudatiuncu lis illectans, quo p̃cepta ceu pharmaca per se subamara, melle prælita libẽtius hauriantur, Sic consolans, ut instituat: sic obiurgans, ut reddat meliorem: sic narrans, ut pietatis imaginẽ uelut expressam in tabula, subijciat oculis, deniq; sic confabulans, nõnunq; & iocãs cum amicis, ut interim adhortetur ad pietatem. In hoc proximũ uolumen coniecimus aliena, propter argumentorum affinitatem. Atq; ea quidem in treis distinximus classes. In prima collocauimus ψευδεπίγραφα, hoc est, falso quidem inscripta diuo Hieronymo: sed tamen erudita, nec indigna lectu. In secunda posuimus ea, quæ non dubijs titulis, a quibus authoribus profecta sint testãtur. In tertiam congessimus ea, quæ non solum falsa, uerum etiam impudentissima inscriptione, Hieronymum authorẽ mentiũtur, uirum omnium longe tum eruditissimũ, tum æloquentissimum: cum adeo sint & inerudita & infantia, ut nec umbrã ullam Hieronymiani pectoris referãt. Id quod suo loco plane demonstrabimus. Neq; uero cẽsoriã hancce uirgulã, καὶ ταυτην λεοντην ipsi nobis arrogãter sumpsimus, ut p̃ libidine animi nostri, de rebus hisce pronunciaremus: sed solo iuuandi studio commoti, quod re diligenter expensa, multis simul & probabilibus argumentis nobis deprehendisse uidebamur, indicauimus. Quod si quis erit, qui hoc quoq; negocium existimet ad ecclesiæ cognitionem pertinere, quod titulos uel ab indoctis, uel a negociatoribus, uel ab impostoribus additos sustulerim, homo, ne quid dicã insolẽtius, in hoc certe genere, nec indiligẽs, nec inexercitatus, clarissima uoce testor, clamo, p̃siteorq;, me nec hic, nec usq; alibi, uel culmũ, quod aiũt, latum ab ecclesiæ placitis uelle digredi, nec mihi in animo esse, uel unũ apicem cõ uellere, in his quæ sint illius authoritate comprobata. Tãtum ne quicquid quocũq; modo in uulgi usum irrepserit, id protinus ab ecclesiæ profectum oraculo putemus. Nos hoc quicquid est laboris, neq; gloriæ, neq; quæstus gratia sumpsim⁹, sed in hoc dũtaxat, quo nostra industria, ueteris illius theologiæ canaliculos consulcremus, quam ego sane solam esse iudicarim Theologiam, nisi uererer, tot agmina diuersa sentientium. Certe non dubitem hanc pronunciare, longe magis conducibilem, uel ad Christianam eruditionem, uel ad uitæ pietatem, ea quæ nunc passim tractatur in scholis, sic Aristotelicis differta decretis, sic sophisticis nugis, ne dicam somnijs contaminata, sic inanium quæstiuncularum inuoluta labirynthis, ut si ipse reuiuiscat Hieronymus, aut etiam Paulus, inter istos nihil Theologiæ scire uideretur. Quæ tamen ipsa, si quibus impense placet, per nos sane cũtumlibet eam deamet, exosculetur, amplectatur, fruatur licebit. Sit suum cuiq; pulchrum, nec obsto quo minus Balbinum delectet polypus Agnæ. Nos iuxta Pauli sententiã, degustatis omnibus, quod optimũ censemus sequi malumus, aut certe, quod nostro ingenio magis accommodum. Nec ab his sacris authoribus, in quibus tam abstrusam diuinarum litterarum scientiam comperimus, tam admirabilẽ æloquentiam, tantam Christiani spiritus fragrantiã auelli possumus, nisi contingant meliora. Neq; eñ me magnopere mouet turba dissentientium, cũ hoc ethnicis quoq; sit & animaduersum & litteris proditum, nunq; tam bene fuisse actum cũ rebus humanis, ut optima plurimis placuerint. Atq; utinam faxit deus optimus maximus, ut quo quicq; melius fuerit, hoc pluribus arrideat. Quod si numero suffragiorũ magis q̃ pondere cõmoueremur, nec ipse placeret Christus, quo sine controuersia nihil est melius: quem, heu facinus indignum, plures mortalium rident, q̃ sequuntur. Atq; ipse adeo suos pusillum appellat gregem. Tum in hac ipsa paucitate Christum profitentiũ, q̃ rari sunt, qui quod cerimonijs ac titulo præ se ferunt, uere moribus exprimant. Socrates apud Platonem, quicquid admodum placeat multitudini, uel ob id ipsum suspectum habendum esse docet, quod placuit. Et Plinius Cecilius, etiam in scholis hanc legem p̃scripsit, ut sciamus eum pessime dixisse, cui maxime sit applausum. Tantũ abest, ut ullius rei precium, turba probantium oporteat æstimare. Quãq; nihil addubito, quin meo sint accessuri iudicio, quotquot in euoluendis authoribus huiusmodi fuerint diligenter uersati, modo accesserint eis instructi litteris, sine quibus, nec intelligi possunt. Cæterum in optimo Theologiæ genere, primas tenet diuus Hieronymus, de latinis loquor: & ita primas tenet, ut omneis post se longo relinquat interuallo: & adeo neminẽ habemus, quem ullo pacto, cũ hoc conferre possimus, ut inter tam innumerabiles Theologos, uix quẽq; habeat & ipsa docta Græcia, qui nostrum æquet Hieronymum, si modo non unam aliquam laudem, sed uniuersas eius dotes simul expendas. Tantum uno in homine reperias sæcularium, ut uocant litterarum cognitionem: tantã omnis antiquitatis peritiam, tot linguarũ ablolutam scientiam, tam admirandam locorum & historiarum omnium noticiam, tam non uulgarem mysticorũ uoluminũ eruditionẽ, tantũ inimitabilis æloquentiæ, tam exactũ ubiq; iudiciũ, tam sacrũ afflati pectoris ardorẽ, rerũ adeo diuersarũ, tam digestam ac præsentem memoriã, tam felicẽ iuxta ac diuitem mixturã, deniq; tanto lepore conditã seueritatẽ, ut quẽadmodũ per se facundi, si cũ Ciceron conferanẽ, protinus uidentur obmutescere: ita cæteri doctores, quos citra collationem suspicimus, cũ Hieronymo cõpositi, uix sapere, uix loqui, uix uiuere uideantur. Atq; id qui dẽ haud in illorũ cõtemptũ, sed in Hieronymi gloriã dictũ uideri uelim, qui suarum excellentia uirtutum, aliorũ laudem nõ minuit, sed admotus obscurat. Reliquos ut limpidos riuos admireris, hic ceu di-

 ues quoddã

Hieronymi opera II (Basel: Froben 1516) f 2,
Erasmus' preface to part 1
Öffentliche Bibliothek, University of Basel

PREFACE TO VOLUME II (1516) PART 1

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM
TO ALL STUDENTS OF THEOLOGY, GREETING

In the previous volume I have placed in random order writings that are hortatory in nature and bear on the conduct of life. Included, as it were, in one package are panegyrical, consolatory, cautionary, and historical themes, that is, writings concerned with the expression of praise, the alleviation of suffering, the application of reproof, or the narration of events. Several familiar letters are also in the collection's *mélange*. I have placed all of this material in the same volume because Jerome himself blended these components into an all but inseparable union, and his goal everywhere is one and the same: his praises serve to entice the reader into imbibing more avidly lessons that, like a medicine that is somewhat bitter by itself, have been daubed with his honey. In consoling he is providing instruction, in reproving he is working moral improvement, in telling a story he is bringing before our eyes the image of holiness, just as in a painting. Finally, in chatting with friends, even joking with them at times, he is in the very act of exhorting to holiness.

In this next volume I have brought together the works of others because of the close relationship of their subject-matter. And these in fact I have divided into three categories. In the first I have assembled *spuria*, that is, works ascribed falsely to St Jerome but nevertheless learned and worth reading. In the second I have placed those works whose attribution is not doubtful and which attest to the authors who composed them. In the third I have collected those writings which – with an attribution not only false but also most shameless – untruthfully assert the authorship of Jerome, whose learning and eloquence are beyond compare, while the absence of learning and eloquence in these pieces is so complete that not even a shadow of Jerome's mind is reflected therein. I will show this clearly at the proper time. But I have not been arrogant enough to assume the censor's rod and the lion's skin to make arbitrary pronouncements on these matters.[1] Moved only by the desire to help, I have revealed the findings I believe I have made after careful reflections and at the same time on the basis of considerable and convincing evidence.

Now there may be some who think that this is another matter that comes within the purview of the church because I have done away with the attributions imposed either by ignoramuses or by merchants or by impos-

tors. Let me tell them that as a man lacking neither diligence nor experience in this field at least, to put it rather modestly, I testify in the clearest voice, I proclaim and profess that neither in this matter nor in any other do I wish to deviate even a hair's breadth, as the saying goes, from the teachings of the church, nor do I have any intention to change even one letter in the doctrines confirmed by her authority. My only concern has been to prevent our thinking that anything that in any way has insinuated itself into general usage has arisen directly from a pronouncement by the church.

This task, such as it is, I have undertaken not for glory or for gain but solely for the purpose of serving by my efforts the interests of those who are pursuing studies in that ancient theology which, were I not afraid of a mighty host of dissenters, I would have no difficulty in declaring truly the only theology. Certainly I would not hesitate to proclaim that this theology does far more to promote Christian learning and a life of holiness. On the other hand the subject-matter now treated far and wide in the schools is so tightly packed with Aristotelian dogmatism and sophistical nonsense (not to say contaminated by inane fancies) and so enveloped in the labyrinths of vain and trivial questions that Jerome himself, should he return to life, or even Paul, would be considered utterly ignorant of theology in that milieu. But if theology herself enjoys high favour with any of those individuals they will have my leave indeed to love her heart and soul, to kiss her, to embrace her, to delight in her. Each to his own in beauty's test. Let Balbinus be charmed with Hagna's wart.[2] I have no objection. According to Paul, in all that we try we select what we deem is best or at least what better suits our natural bent.[3] We cannot be torn away, however, from those sacred authors in whom we find so profound a knowledge of theology, so admirable an eloquence, and so sweet a fragrance of the Christian spirit, unless something better should come our way. For I do not find much to disturb me in the number of dissenters, since even the pagans observed, and reported in their writings, that never had the affairs of mankind reached such an advanced state of well-being that the best found favour with most. And it is my prayer that Almighty God grant that the better have a wider appeal. If we were influenced more by the number of votes than by the qualifications of the voters not even Christ himself, who without question has no peer, would find favour. More people ridiculed him than followed him. Oh! the wickedness and shame of it! And for this reason he himself calls his followers a tiny flock. Further, even among the very few who profess Christ how rare are those who in the conduct of their lives truly embody the faith displayed in the rituals they attend and in the name they bear! In Plato it is the teaching of Socrates that whatever has a strong appeal for the multitude

must be held suspect for the very reason it has that appeal.[4] And Pliny the Younger also has laid down for us this rule observed in the schools: take it for granted that he who has received the most applause has given the worst speech.[5] So far from the truth is it that the value of anything ought to be set by the great number of people giving it approval. I have no doubt, however, that all who have diligently applied themselves to the reading of those sacred authors will side with me in this, provided they have approached them schooled in the literature indispensable for understanding them.

Moreover, in the best kind of theology St Jerome holds first place – I speak of the Latin Fathers – and his primacy is such that he far outdistances all the others. And so we have no one we can compare in any way with him. Thus among such an innumerable throng of theologians even learned Greece herself has scarcely anyone to match our Jerome, if only consideration be given not to some one quality in isolation but to all his endowments conjoined in a unified whole. In one man there may be discerned so vast a secular learning, as the knowledge of literature is called, so penetrating an understanding of all antiquity, a thorough command of so many languages, so admirable an acquaintance with the geography and history of all peoples, so uncommon an erudition in esoteric writings, so full a measure of inimitable eloquence, so true a power of judgment in all things, so holy a fervour of a soul inspired, so orderly and ready a memory of such wide-ranging scope, a blending, at once so happy and rich, and finally a gravity seasoned with so much wit that, just as those who by themselves are eloquent immediately seem to become mute on comparison with Cicero, so other learned men whom we esteem by themselves seem not quite wise, not quite articulate, not quite imbued with life on comparison with Jerome. And I would like my remarks to be understood not indeed as expressions of disdain for learned men but as a glorification of Jerome, whose pre-eminent virtues do not diminish, but rather by their presence eclipse the praise of others. One may admire the others as limpid streams; Jerome, however, is like a fecund river of gold, so to speak, whose flow carries downstream all manner of riches.

But I observed that many shrink from reading this truly saintly teacher not so much because of anything they disapproved of (for no one would withhold approval of him save the dullest of the dull, one, I may add, no less dull than wicked) as because they were put off by the frequent obscurities they met like rough patches in the road. And what one does not understand must have less appeal. Therefore it is with pious zeal, as I believe, that I have undertaken this task, which is surely no ordinary one. My goal is not to

display the subtlety of his mind in bitter disputes about dogma but to remove obstacles in the way and to open up the most verdant fields of Jerome's writings for the pious reader – one who is a willing pupil rather than an inaccessible pundit – to enable him now to range about most enjoyably with greater freedom and less hindrance. I have tried to achieve this end first by the most careful emendation of the text and secondly by the addition of summaries and annotations at the appropriate places. And not content with this, when I saw that the text of so holy a man was not only terribly corrupted but also so contaminated by the writings of others mixed in with it that it almost amounted to the work of another, in order to make sure the avid reader not miss anything at all, I did not in fact remove the spurious and the counterfeit I detected, but at the same time I separated them and consigned them to their proper place. And this I did not do with the hasty and rash judgment most are wont to display. But with all the keenness of scent at my command, I have hunted down every shred of evidence; this has given me full confidence that everyone who has some acquaintance with good literature – or even just a smattering thereof, provided he is honest and unbiased – will subscribe without hesitation to my findings. If, however, anyone should be minded to engage in unpleasant controversy about these matters, he is not likely to find an opponent in me, at least. I have simply expressed my opinion, ready to change my tune and adopt a different view should a better understanding be provided by anyone. Further, if anyone, failing in such an endeavour, still behaves in a quarrelsome and obstreperous manner and prefers to be guided by partisan bias rather than sound judgment (for human ignorance is a most persistent flaw, especially if accompanied by a man's assured trust in the validity of his own knowledge), I will never exchange even a word with that person.

For the man who finds Jerome alone acceptable I have made it possible not to come unawares upon the work of others; for the man who accepted anything at all and who devours everything without discrimination I have omitted nothing. In fact I have made some additions. I have only removed the attributions – which may be put back even in capital letters, as they say, by anyone who wishes to do so to gratify his own bias. Whoever has the mind to may rescind my critical comments and find pleasure in his own judgment. He may avow the perfection of his learning and insist on the oracular nature of his pronouncements. A lowly, little man, not unaware of my modest attainments, in my desire to help I give what I can, and the modicum of talent the Lord has vouchsafed to me I devote to the common good as far as my abilities allow. This enables me, to be sure, to offer at least my zealous efforts, if nothing else, like interest to the investor requiring a return on his capital. For the learned and honest these remarks of mine are

more than sufficient. But to give an even higher degree of satisfaction to everyone, learned as well as unlearned, temperate and intemperate, I shall not be loath to repeat myself and with greater thoroughness to explain my position, my intention being first to set forth the causes that give rise to such *spuria* and secondly to demonstrate the signs and inferential evidence by which false attribution may be detected.

At the outset I am not going to demand that anyone believe me that this has happened to Jerome's works unless he has discovered that there was never an author of the first magnitude either among the Greeks or among the Latins to whom the same thing had not happened. Among the Greeks Homer is the most ancient of poets, yet Aristarchus purged his poetry of foreign elements, marking outstanding verses as genuine and clearly worthy of Homer's authorship by means of asterisks, and on the other hand delivering the death blow with obelisks to counterfeit and spurious verses.[6] Regarding the *Hymns* and *The Battle of the Frogs and Mice* scholars are in doubt.[7] For the *Hymns*, which are cited under the name of Orpheus, Aristotle denies are his. The well-known fables under the name of Aesop Quintilian prefers to assign to Hesiod.[8] Several plays of Aristophanes and Euripides are marked as spurious by scholars. There are poems that in some manuscripts you will find ascribed to Theocritus and in others to Moschus. There are several among the Platonic dialogues that everyone considers spurious save the person who has no opinion at all. The same thing happened in the case of Aristotle, though less frequently. But works of doubtful attribution aside, there is almost general agreement that the book *De mirabilibus auscultationibus* is the work of another author. Moreover, it is undeniable that certain elements in the *Problems* have been added by other hands.[9] This is indicated by several pieces of evidence but especially by the quite frequent repetition of the same ideas. Among the commentaries of Plutarch I too find several that I am ready to attest on the most solemn of oaths he never wrote himself. The same thing occurred in the case of the dialogues of Lucian, as the evidence itself indicates and scholars affirm. On the other hand the same scholars claim for Phalaris the letters published under his name.[10]

And now for the Latin. Among the large number of comedies that bore the name of Plautus only twenty-one are accepted as genuine and of undoubted provenance by Marcus Varro, a man most learned on every score, and for this reason they were called 'Varronian,' according to Aulus Gellius.[11] The rhetorical precepts of *Ad Herennium* have been read for many centuries now as the work of Cicero and cited as such by important authors, yet not only does the style clearly show it to be the work of someone else, but other proofs beyond dispute likewise reveal it.[12] Moreover, by a false

attribution to the authorship of Cicero certain speeches have been inserted into the body of the orations, despite the clash of style. One speech was added to the corpus not long ago by Filippo Beroaldo, who certainly is not an unlearned man but whose zeal is stronger than his judgment.[13] The speech falls so far short of that inimitable eloquence of Cicero that it does not even seem to be the product of a Latin author. Further, how many writings have usurped the name of Virgil which the most convincing arguments show to be the work of others? Scholars deny that the *Declamations* published under the name of Quintilian are really his to whom they are credited.[14] Certain proverbs are read as Seneca's, among which one will find several mimes cited as the work of the mime writer Publius by competent authors, to say nothing however about others which are open to question.[15] There are in circulation letters of Paul to Seneca and of Seneca to Paul in which will be found nothing at all worthy either of Paul or of Seneca.[16] A work about education circulates under the name of Severinus Boethius that one might sooner say was the effort of a cowhand than the work of that distinguished philosopher.[17] I have reviewed only for the sake of example some authors, a select few especially well-known, since in any case the writer does not exist who has not had something falsely ascribed to him.

Let us then proceed to our own, that is to the sacred writers. The Hebrews do not accept certain writings, and among those that have been accepted there is no consensus about the author. St Jerome himself delivers a finishing stroke to many passages in Daniel with an obelisk.[18] He rejects completely the third and fourth books of Ezra as apocryphal, warning us not to take pleasure in the imaginative flights of those books.[19] This he would not have done, I think, had he not believed that they were falsely ascribed to Ezra. Many have had doubts for a long time about the books of Judith, Esther, Tobit, and Wisdom. Even during the lifetime of Jerome the Romans did not accept the Letter to the Hebrews.[20] Nor did the Greeks accept the Apocalypse of John, because in violation of his custom the name John is tamped into the text time and time again.[21] Secondly as a reason for their rejection of the work they maintained that there was nothing in it commensurate with apostolic grandeur, believing rather that the language smacked of lifeless imitation. Finally among their reasons some things they noticed in it about the enumeration of years smelled of certain heretical doctrine in their opinion. And indeed who does not believe that the letter addressed to the Laodiceans cited with the name of Paul is a counterfeit, a writing marked by the insertion of several words here and there from other letters of the Apostle? As for the Letter of James it was the conviction of the ancients that someone other than James had published it, although as time went on there was a gradual increase in its authoritativeness. Most say that

the Second Letter of St Peter did not originate with him, an opinion St Jerome somewhere agrees with; elsewhere, however, he takes another view and expresses his opinion that the difference in style of this letter derives from his employment of a different translator.[22] And today three letters are read almost everywhere and cited almost everywhere as the apostle John's, although Jerome clearly asserts that only the first is his.[23] In the case of those writings, however, which belong to the canon we simply accept with love, as a Christian should, the pronouncements of ecclesiastical authority.

Let us now turn to those writings which are outside the canon. There was once great controversy among the learned about the books of Origen. But I do not want to burden the reader more by listing them one by one. He who desires may read Jerome's *Catalogue of Ecclesiastical Writers*,[24] he may read others who give us a similar account, and he will find that this kind of false attribution of books was not only more common but also more shameless among Christians than it was among pagans. And this is less surprising if we realize that so many spurious books were mixed with the works of Ambrose and Augustine.

But these remarks of mine will become much more credible once I explain the causes and circumstances that seem to account for these false attributions. In all it appears that they were the result chiefly of a double set of circumstances, in part from error and ignorance, in part from design and deliberate effort, but in each case in different ways. For several times it happened that the same word, or, at least in the case of more than one word, a word similar to another offered an opportunity for error, as once several plays had been falsely ascribed to Plautus, so Aulus Gellius tells us, although they were by Plautius and were 'Plautian' and not by Plautus and 'Plautine.'[25] In a similar error, the two later letters, as Jerome has recorded, were attributed to the apostle John because there was another man with the same name, John the Presbyter who, it is asserted, wrote them.[26] And we attribute the books of the *Hierarchies* to Dionysius the Areopagite and accept the opinion that identifies him with the person who, we understand, won a martyr's crown near the city of Paris, thus creating a single Dionysius out of three, unless I am mistaken.[27] Circumstances like this in history too give rise repeatedly to great errors. This happens, for example, when a book of Aristophanes the grammarian is assigned to Aristophanes the poet or when someone supposes that the deeds of the Scipios in the narrative of historians are the exploits of Scipio Africanus.[28]

Again it sometimes happens that some copyist or student on account of a similarity of subject-matter joins together shorter words by various authors in the same volume. Thereupon a not too attentive reader, not coming across an ascription of authorship or finding it effaced, thinks that

everything is his whose name he has found on the first page of the volume. Sometimes if by chance the identification is missing the reader is led by a conjecture and ascribes authorship not to the actual writer but to someone he suspects is the writer either because that other person has developed a similar theme or addressed the same audience or had a similar style. Under these circumstances there is no doubt that very many writings were attributed to Jerome that were not his own. St Jerome wrote summaries of the books of Holy Scripture; thereupon the not too learned and certainly hasty reader ascribes to Jerome whatever summary without an attribution he comes upon in this field, whether it be Isidore's or Gilbert's or someone else's.[29] And the discourse beginning '*Cogitis me O Paula et Eustochium*' is thought to have been written by Jerome because it displays the names of those women to whom Jerome often wrote. Works assigned to Anselm in some manuscripts you will find on the contrary in others displaying the name of Augustine. This because their styles are not at all different. And there are those who to avoid odium publish books *sans nom, sans auteur, sans titre*, that is, without any attribution. Then there is the person who under the influence of some flimsy conjecture attributes authorship to this one or that, anyone who happens to come to mind. Sometimes it happens that in declamatory exercises called *μελέται* in Greek authorship is not seriously ascribed, for it is thought that the true and serious attribution belongs not to the author but to the character whom the declaimer is trying to portray. We are aware that this kind of exercise was once customary in the schools. The letters of Phalaris[30] belong to this category, as do the letters of Brutus to various individuals and the letters of Paul to Seneca and Seneca to Paul. So Portius the brigand[31] argues the case of Cicero against Catiline, playing the part of Cicero, to be sure, and calling himself Cicero, not Portius, as often as he did it. This is the cause of error on the part of those who confuse fiction with fact.

Further, we know it is not uncommon even today for zealous booksellers intentionally to misuse the names of famous writers for their own profit. Others cloak their designs under influential names in their attempt either to commend to their reader their nonsense and baneful ideas or to enhance the advantage they hold over others' stupidity or to promote swifter and wider circulation in the community for their doctrinal poison under the cover of an important name. Hence, for example, those most shameless attributions, the Letter of Jesus to Abigarus, the Gospel of Peter, the Gospel of Nicodemus,[32] and innumerable others of the same ilk, the greater part of which ecclesiastical authority has condemned by name in papal decretals. I myself have detected through an abundance of clear evidence that there existed a certain individual whose special vocation it was

to introduce in the manner of a cuckoo his very own slobber into the works of others, especially the works of Ambrose, Augustine, and Jerome. For the style clearly shows one and the same man responsible. He had a prodigious lust, so to speak, or rather a mad desire, to defile in every way all the works of Jerome, so much so that he was not content to add his own letters and books to Jerome's as one might sew ragged patches onto a beautiful piece of purple cloth, but he injected his own trashy efforts into the very tissue of the commentaries on the psalms and the prophets just as one might defile a noble wine with urine or vinegar beyond any possibility of restoring it. I will indeed have more specific things to say about that impostor when I come to the third section of this volume, into which I have thrown together the unlearned and foolish nonsense of that fellow.

You know the many ways in which attribution of an authorship has been distorted, and you are aware that this occurrence is neither so rare nor so unusual that almost no writer (this is oftener true of famous and highly regarded authors) has been unaffected by it. I have but to show how this deception is susceptible to detection and exposure, especially when we are dealing with the writings of St Jerome, our present subject. For the man who is satisfied with the name of the author on the title-page regardless of how it got there will read fourteen Gospels, I think, instead of four. Nothing is easier than to place any name you want on the front of a book. Certainly those ancestors of old were not deterred from rejecting many apocryphal absurdities, however magnificent the name on the title-page. Undoubtedly they looked more closely at the content than at the attribution. Besides, if we accept sight unseen, as the saying goes, any work that displays the name of an approved author, who would not find it easy to deceive the world, especially in these times when any writing is immediately multiplied in thousands of copies and circulated through every land? You are not satisfied with the label on a physician's pillbox, but you sniff, handle, and taste the contents; nor do you at once believe the unguent to be balsam if the unguent jar is so labelled. Instead you take every precaution not to be fooled by a label and receive poison in place of medicine and mud in place of ointment. Not content with the inscription, you test a coin. Not trusting the price-tag, you examine closely a piece of cloth. You rub gold on a touchstone when uneasy about its colour. There are characteristics by which we distinguish a real gem from a counterfeit, and it is not enough simply to call it an emerald or an amber. In the case of books alone will any name at all assigned without good reason be enough for acceptance?

But there may be an objection. What is so important about whose name is on a book, provided it is a good book? Perhaps in the case of Plautus' plays it may not be so important. In the case of sacred writers and pillars of the

church, however, from whom popes and theologians derive as from oracles their teachings on war, on the sacraments, and on the most serious matters, it will be, I think, of the greatest importance. Otherwise it will happen that the words, nay the nonsense, of some impostor presented with the name of Paul or Jerome would force me either to be silent or to accept what is not right. This we see every day being done in theological disputations, to the great amusement of those who are conversant with literature of prime quality, and it is far easier to detect a false attribution than to identify the actual author. Yet sometimes this also can be detected by men of keen perception.

But what are the features then by which one may attain this competence? There are indeed quite a few considerations that justify an inference other than the wrongness of time and the inconsistency of doctrine. Actually anyone eager to create a deception easily imitates these features and basic aspects of this kind. The surest sign and truly the Lydian stone, as they say,[33] is the character and the quality of speech. As each individual has his own appearance, his own voice, his own character and disposition, so each has his own style of writing. And the quality of mind is manifest in speech even more than the likeness of the body is reflected in a mirror. This is the rule Varro observed in the study of the plays of Plautus, paying no heed to the ascriptions of Aelius or Claudius or Aurelius or Accius or Manilius, that is, the attributions of copyists, as Gellius says.[34] This is the rule Aristarchus observed and the rule St Jerome himself observed, even when dealing only with first-rate stylists. For between the ineloquent and the eloquent the difference is clearer than between a man and an ape, or between flint and a precious stone. In his *Apologia contra Rufinum* he claims a book for Novatianus that Rufinus used to assign to Tertullian and says: 'The peculiar qualities of style show the eloquence of the author.'[35] Again with the same argument he claims a work as Pamphilus' own with the words: 'For what reasons will I know that it is Pamphilus'? Style and taste obviously can inform me.'[36] And when some men denied that a book assigned to St Augustine was really his Jerome said that he had recognized it as genuine from a form of argument it displayed. The Second Letter of Peter he believed to be by another hand, simply on the evidence of style.[37] Further, writing without self-assertiveness, he indicates that a case for Clement's authorship of the Letter to the Hebrews is seemingly arguable because its style shows a close resemblance to that of the letter written to the Corinthians in the name of the Roman church by the latter.[38] And not to indulge my prolixity any further, let me just say that in the *Catalogue of Illustrious Writers* he often takes away books from some authors and assigns them to others. Here the rule he follows is nothing other than the flavour or, as he puts it, the taste of the language and the style.

But all this usually makes the dullards laugh; they want to appear, save the mark, clear-voiced and clever when they give their riposte that the style of a writer does not always remain the same. Such are the notions especially yelped at us by those who, in a word, do not have any understanding of style or any familiarity with writers of solid worth. As if indeed we were not aware that there is some variation in a writer's use of language, the variation arising either from his time of life or from the nature of his subject or from his predilections or from an advantage sought or an attitude of mind. For the eloquence of Cicero in his *Philippics*, the work of his old age, is not the same as that of the speeches arraigning Verres, the product of his younger years. And he defended Milo in a style different from the style of his *De officiis*. Nor am I myself now discussing the matter at hand in the same sort of style I once used to praise Prince Philip, because I am aware that the style of an encomium differs from that employed for expository annotations.[39] Cicero's treatment of his *Orator* is marked by a greater eloquence than is his enunciation of rhetorical precepts in his *De inventione*. Sometimes we purposely vary our style either because we take it into our heads to try out different styles in our eagerness to express ourselves now in this way and now in that, or because we make the shift in style to accommodate those to whom we are writing. Another point also, since oratorical power grows through constant practice some change is inevitable. Finally, as the speech of an excited man is different from that of one who is composed or cheerful, so the style of persons not similarly disposed is different. This must be taken into consideration by one who wishes to pass judgment on diction.

The countenance of an angry man is unlike that of a man of kindly spirit; the countenance of a sad person unlike that of a cheerful one; and yet this is no bar to the recognition of an acquaintance. A person whom you knew in his younger days you recognize in his old age, though everything is changed by the passage of time. The resemblance of brothers and sisters to one another is no obstacle to distinguishing Paris from Hector and Cassandra from Polyxene. And I am not so sure that any set of twins has ever been so indistinguishably alike that close associates at least could not tell them apart. Indeed, those who are highly observant may distinguish one egg from another egg, one fig from another fig, and, proverbial wisdom notwithstanding, it is simply not true that one style is indistinguishable from another; for in no other sphere of activity is there a greater diversity – provided there is the presence of style. Allow an additional factor: have a writer – an artist – pass judgment on the style. For it is not easy to distinguish the style of Tartaretus from the utterance of Bricot; indeed it is no easier to do this than to see the difference between the style of Scotus and that of William of Occam or between the style of Lyra and that of Hugh of St Cher or to see the difference between one broom and another broom or

between one piece of metal and another piece.[40] On the other hand, no one would have trouble telling Augustine and Jerome apart except someone whose ignorance about the use of language is absolute. Never does Jerome let his writing deteriorate to the point of becoming less polished than St Thomas even at his most rhetorical. But, as I have just said, it is the author, the artist, who makes the most credible judgments about an author. It is the sculptor who immediately recognizes the work of a sculptor, the painter the work of a painter. The master musician knows the composer of a song from its harmonies. Protogenes did not unhesitatingly detect the identity of an Apelles before seeing a line the latter had drawn, but as an artist he recognized an artist, whereas some ploughman is not likely to see the difference between the work of Fulvius or Rutuba from that of Apelles or Zeuxis.[41]

I frankly admit there is the possibility that the similarity is so close in some cases that it is better to observe the restraint of doubt than to pronounce definitive judgment. Yet when I speak of style, I do not understand simply the surface of language, the skin, as it were, or veneer of words or of figures present in words. Consequently, wherever I discover five words distinctive of Jerome, I would not hesitate a moment to affirm that Jerome was the writer, or I would decide without delay that it was Cicero who repeatedly ends his periods with an *esse videatur*.[42] An author whom I find several times using *interim* in place of *interdum* I would forthwith identify as Quintilian. A work in which I read *tamquam* in place of *velut* or *infulcire* in place of *inculcare* I would promptly believe to be by Seneca. When I see *sane quam* and *oppido quam* used in place of *valde* I would instantly take the position that the author was Gellius, and where *nupturire*, *verbigerari*, or another similar word occurs my immediate judgment would be that Apuleius is speaking. Or a writer who uses with some frequency the rhetorical figures that put words with similar endings or words with similar inflections in parallel positions I would at once believe is Augustine. Or the author whose numerous periods draw out the thought to great lengths I would conclude in a trice is Gregory.

The term style comprehends all at once a multiplicity of things – manner in language and diction, texture, so to speak, and, further, thought and judgment, line of argumentation, inventive power, control of material, emotion, and what the Greeks call ἦθος,[43] – and within each one of these notions a profusion of shadings, no fewer, to be sure, than the differences in talent, which are as numerous as men themselves. One may have greater charm, another more conscientiousness, still another more simplicity, another a more vivid personality, another more gentleness, another more intensity; one man may be marked by austerity, another by kindliness, one by

loquacity, another by conciseness, one by learning, another by holiness, one by copiousness, another by force and vigour. Finally, to keep this within bounds, style is at once an imaging of the mind in its every facet. It is like physical propagation, where parental features appear in the offspring. Consequently, whenever the inner faculty exercises its power to produce something, all the peculiarities of the mind may be recognized in it, especially by a knowledgeable observer. In the case of none, however, is the judgment more certain than in the case of those whom strength of intellect, depth of knowledge, and matchless eloquence and other pre-eminent gifts place beyond the range of imitation. For although there would be some doubt where mediocre talent is involved, yet surely Apelles' work 'Aphrodite Rising from the Sea' would be recognized for its true worth by an artist even from a distance.

The ambition of any writer to get his work read in the place of Cicero's would be ineffectual because the latter's felicitous ease and delightful refinement would transcend his capabilities. Cicero in his letters says that he has given his writings such distinctive features that it would not be difficult to distinguish them from the writings of others,[44] for certain pieces in this genre by others' hands were being attributed to him. But our Jerome's gifts exist in such profusion, are of such extraordinary excellence, that any one of them – any one – would be more than enough to produce a difference. Some of these gifts he does share with others, but not without being several cuts above them. Here his superiority is so absolute that when juxtaposed with him they appear not to have what in reality they do have. Besides, he has certain special qualities that no Christian either has possessed or has striven to possess. An inborn vitality of mind which I may call preternatural, a marvellous fertility, an incomparable fervour, eloquence, sanctity, a knowledge of Sacred Scripture, a passionate application to study, and other attributes of the sort are so conspicuous in him that the quintessence of excellence can be discerned in every one of them. But they are special qualities. Now in Jerome is that happy union of all qualities, by which any feature found either in any kind of author or body of knowledge, among the Greeks or among the Hebrews or among the Romans, be it ancient or modern, by an amazing feat of ingenuity (as I may call it) is crammed into his work, interwoven, and combined in such a way that one is astonished to find that from elements so diverse a unity can exist. There is no one who more compactly, no one who more felicitously, embodies the testimony of mystical literature in his work. This is material which he kept on hand like ready cash and which, I gather, he had organized and filed for set passages, thus insuring his immediate access to the material once hidden and scattered in authors of proven worth. Out of the arcane mysteries of an

ancient document or out of the profound obscurity of prophets does he fetch some item with a will displaying, one may say, his wealth to fire up the reader with a greater fervour for the study of Sacred Scripture. Then it is possible to see in him that never-failing quality, his lively humour, I call it, which the learned admire in Cicero; for even in matters of extreme gravity, it is still amazing to see the keenness of his wit and the charm of his good nature. You may perceive in him a native talent that is many-sided and, I may almost say, cunning. He finds delight in the outlay of dilemma and exclamation. He has what I would term a unique forthrightness in attacking and depicting human vice. This he employs against heretics and false accusers with such vehemence that sometimes, I will be frank, I am obliged to find him wanting in self-restraint.[45]

Further, he wrote no work that he does not himself cite in several places, to the end, I think, of preventing either the disappearance of his works or their usurpations by other attributions. At the same time he nowhere lays claim to any of the writings I reject, nor does he even casually mention them. This is not to say, however, that certain of the works I have removed from the corpus of Jerome either were not found in the very old manuscripts or carried the names of others. And in some that unidentified impostor has his own name fixed, a circumstance that creates the very suspicion of the imposture he sought. There are other signs also, which in the interests of brevity I omit. In short, Jerome has a special quality about him, a kind of mental savour and temperament, a quality which may be felt rather than explained. After a detailed scrutiny of all the works which truly represent the godlike man, I have duly assigned them to his authorship, stripping from the others the false title. In these determinations I relied not so much on my own native capability, whose worth, I am aware, is quite modest, nor on a degree of learning that I do not claim for myself. But I did in part rely on the intimacy which repeated readings of Jerome's works gained for me just as face-to-face association with him might have done. (For even in the past in my youth I found an uncommon delight in his writings and in the present my fascination with him is stronger, having grown as it has with the growth of my knowledge of him.) I relied too on assiduous application by which through exhaustive research I have, I believe, reached the truth revealed by evidence beyond dispute.

Now how much credit should be given to my judgment I leave to the judgment of others. For I do not recognize the approbation accorded my efforts in this matter by men who are, to be sure, most distinguished scholars, but who are also my friends. But in the matter of a critical appraisal of a kind of style, if I take any credit for myself, I take credit not at all in a spirit of arrogance, in view of my many, many years now of experience in

this field of competence, especially prepared as I am to exercise either of two options: either to change my opinion in deference to a more elegant proposal or to acknowledge defeat in the face of a preference for mortal conflict instead of enlightenment. For to those who will scoff at me for taking certain writings away from Jerome, though they are cited with his name in decretals and are read in public ceremonies in the churches, I will give full satisfaction when I come to the last part of this volume. This is the place to which I have relegated those writings which, as they have been insinuated into Jerome's text by a most shameless impostor, I have considered utterly beneath a scholar's investment of valuable time. For the present it should suffice only to offer the reminder that very many writings were once customarily read publicly in the churches which afterwards were viewed with disfavour by bishops, men more learned than in earlier times or more alert, as St Jerome testifies in his *Catalogue of Writers*.[46] Indeed among those very pieces which he rejects and on which papal censorship puts its mark of disapproval in the decretals a goodly number had once been accepted in official Christian practice. Then too, Jerome did not have scruples about changing the edition of the canonical books that was most acceptable all over the world either in his translation or in his emendation of the text. Now I do not indeed offer any rebuttal to those who may protest that this is a role proper for the pope and not proper for someone like me. Believe me, I admit that it is the responsibility of the pope to make the decisions about these matters and that it is a law from above, especially in questions involving the Christian faith, for him to provide guidance for me and my colleagues in any case. And yet scholars declare that that collection of Gratian, whoever he was, had never been approved by an official action of the church and had gradually gained its commanding position more by the usurpation of the schoolmen than by synodal decree.[47] Today among the schoolmen themselves, it may be noted, the testimony of that work is not readily accepted; only what has been pertinent to our concerns gains acceptance, and what is at odds with such concerns is rejected as outdated and obsolete.

But let us grant validity to whatever the church gives approval along with the spirit in which it is given. This is certainly of great importance. For the authority she assigns to the books of the Hebrews and to the four evangelists is not equal; nor is it her mind that the books of Judith, Esther, Tobit, and Wisdom have the same weight as the Pentateuch of Moses. She accepts Paul but as an apostle. She accepts Augustine but as an interpreter and accepts him according to no other rule than the writer himself enunciates: he wants his own books to be read. She accepts canonical Scripture but without wishing anyone's faith to become a matter of dispute. She accepts the human stories about the saints, not as certain in every detail

but as capable of being read with ameliorative effects on morality. She makes some concessions to established custom and popular feeling, provided she has assured herself that the writings in question can be read without mischief to religious belief and moral principle, unless someone, perhaps, because he has read in the decretals that we bestow high praise on the Easter work of Sedulius,[48] should straightaway demand that the versicles of Sedulius be put on a par with the Acts of the Apostles. Finally, the issue in the matter is not one of ascription of authorship but of content. In any case, what will be the upshot of this when the hymns which are sung in public places of worship –and this is bound to happen frequently – we see presented now with one, now with another, attribution? Above all, if the church has changed certain of her doctrines concerning matters of the greatest moment, as, for example, concerning services and prayers or concerning matrimony, after considering, to be sure, the change with some care, what importance would there be in those parts of the change which either have no relevance at all for the Christian faith or at least a much slighter relevance? For in my opinion a person would not *ipso facto* be a heretic for thinking that the Gospel which is read as Mark's work ought to be assigned to Peter.

But I have already discussed these matters almost at greater length than I had planned. They will be given a rather full treatment in their proper place. As it is, to prevent a too wordy introduction from boring the reader, before he even reaches the discussion of the subject itself, I will set the letters themselves before him, and each letter will be introduced with a brief critical note.

PREFACE TO VOLUME II (1516) PART 3

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM
TO ALL STUDENTS OF THEOLOGY, GREETING

I am not unaware, dear reader, that in the first part of this volume I have omitted certain pieces which smack of both the folly and the stammer of the same impostor whose nonsense we have relegated to the last part here in this volume, giving them, so to speak, steerage accommodation. They would not moreover be worthy of inclusion if, as I declared before, I had not considered it more humane and forbearing to err in the direction of tolerance by letting certain pieces that deserved to be discarded remain rather than to remove anything at all worth reading; this in imitation of fair judges who are wont to be predisposed towards acquittal rather than conviction, whether the reason be that it is more humane to free the guilty from judicial liability than to destroy the innocent or that, dismissed without warrant, he can again be brought to trial and pay the penalty of the law. For a man who is unjustly condemned cannot as easily be helped. And yet even here in the critical notes I have added I have more truly expressed opinion rather than formal judgment. Now, in this section of the volume I shall not say that you will find nothing at all to match the level of Jerome's achievement, but I shall say nothing at all to warrant an investment of the precious time that may be at the disposal of either the zealous seeker of holiness or the devotee of humane letters. But here we have made a concession to the invincible obstinacy of some ignorant men who once an idea has been implanted in their minds are loath to have it uprooted. Their stupidity renders them incapable of making correct judgments on their own and at the same time their inflexibility precludes the will to appreciate another's point of view – a race of men whom Hesiod rightly has judged to be the very last and absolutely useless.[1]

As often as I direct my thoughts to the extreme follies of the fellow and the extreme trivialities that concern him, I am not quite sure what my reaction should be. Should I be more amazed at the most insolent madness of this writer (whatever his identity), who, having come into the world foreordained, I might say, to ruin good authors, devoted all his strength, all his literary efforts, it seems, indeed, the zeal of a whole lifetime, to the sole end of defiling with absurd blatherings the most learned words of distinguished men? Or should I be more amazed at our own inertia or, to put it more accurately, our stupefaction in reading now for several centuries the

banalities of an unknown wretch as the work of Jerome, whose learning, eloquence, and holiness are absolutely beyond compare? The fellow's drivel manifests no weight of aphoristic expression, no refinement of language, no charm, no subtlety, no learning, in fine, no trace of a sound mind. But somehow a spate of words has rushed helter-skelter into his mouth without any selectivity of content. Everywhere his writing abounds with grammatical blunders and the most debased words and recent coinages borrowed from the kitchen. There are exclamations, insane and sudden, which he employs in a way that makes you quite sure he is acting out an assumed role and that he is not speaking from the heart as a responsible and holy man. So of course this rhetorician repeats for us the exclamations of Jerome. In a word, he is so different from Jerome on every count that it would not be easier to distinguish a pig from a man except that his wits are inferior to a pig's. And yet these writings – oh, the shame of it – usurp the good name of Jerome.

Now this has happened because a substantial number of men lack good judgment. How are judgments to be made about the works of a man so distinguished by those who have never learned anything except sophistical absurdities, ignorant as they are of all the languages, unacquainted with antiquity, experienced in no kind of writing and conversant with no kind of worthwhile literature? Some, again, while they very much want to appear kind, while they consider it impolite to find fault with anything that has once been smeared on paper, heartily accept the absurdities of those who rant and rave as outstanding memorials of the most learned men, and they read everything with an unmarked rule, as they say.[2] As a necessary consequence, while with ill-timed restraint they hesitate to attack a worthless wretch who deserves the lash or hard labour, they insult great men when, to be sure, they place them on the same level as men of such incompetence. So one can feel righteous indignation at this, as Homer has expressed it in that well-known verse: 'The coward and the valiant are held in equal esteem.'[3] There are others who, while advancing the glory of Jerome with zeal indeed but with a want of prudence, knowingly and purposely close their eyes, and so they do not recognize what they perceive, do not hear what they hear, and do not feel what they touch with their hands. They think that it makes no difference whose words praise a man or why he is praised, if only he is praised. Alexander the far-famed king of Macedonia did not want any random artist to do a sculpture or painting of him,[4] and, as Seneca has truly written, praise from certain sources is tantamount to blame.[5] Nor does the most saintly Jerome have a need for praise so exigent that commendation must come from the lies of an ignorant babbler. Again, there are those who

are not completely wanting in judgment, but it is hard to believe how much influence imagination and conviction have, once a man's mind has been taken over; and this holds true not only in the case of the average person but even in the case of the most learned men of sound judgment. Thus the eyes are deceived every day. Thus the ears of the whole populace once were demanding the pig of Parmeno, an occurrence which thereafter even passed into a proverb.[6]

It will not be amiss to recall here a few stories to make my point clearer. Once when in my youth I was a member of the household of the renowned Hendrik van Bergen, bishop of Cambrai, I enjoyed the friendship of Pietro Santeramo, a native of Sicily, a man whose wit was not less than his learning.[7] He used to tell the story about how during the time he was living in Paris he had written an epigram of the sort that rings with what may be called an echo:

> Since from afar you cross the bar
> A swan's sad song brings balm along.

To it he affixed the title 'A swan dying before a cave.' Then he used a fine calligrapher to inscribe this couplet in as close an imitation of the writing of antiquity as possible. He purposely left some letters mutilated, as if they had been damaged by the passage of time. He presented the poem thus embellished to Fausto Andrelini, who for many years now had lectured on the art of poetry there in Paris.[8] He explained that he found that small fragment among some very old remains of antiquity obviously because he knew the fellow would have shown scant interest had he said that he himself had dashed it off a day or two before. Fausto read it again and again, and it is difficult to describe the amazement he experienced and the admiration he felt and the feeling, almost of adoration, with which he viewed that learned and inimitable relic of antiquity. There was no end or limit to his admiration of antiquity, until Santeramo, giving himself away, turned it all into a laughing matter.

Guillaume Cop once found amusement in a similar way.[9] He is the immortal ornament of Basel, which gave the world a hero of such quality, nay the inextinguishable glory of all our Germany, the good fortune of France, which has now enjoyed a man of such stature for so many years – and may she enjoy him for as long as possible – an embellishment of the royal court, where in the household of the king who without doubt is the first of all kings he serves as the first of physicians. But (to express it in a way that better becomes him) he is a protector of the whole world, who by his

most learned writings rescued and restored the most salubrious of all the arts, I mean medicine, which almost became extinct because of the ignorance of its practitioners. Now then, he is a man not only of outstanding integrity and learning but also endowed with what I may call a most delightful and jovial manner by no means, however, unbecoming a man of character. Once when at supper a bowl filled with assorted greens had been placed before him and when, as it happened, several physicians were at table with him he selected an herb very familiar even to ordinary folk, a herb the Greeks call *petroselinon*, a kind of parsley. 'Physicians ought to know,' he observed, 'the appearance of herbs and their specific efficacy. Now a good number of us physicians are here. Let the man who knows name this herb.' No one dared speak up because everyone now was convinced that it was some rare and exotic kind of green about which this great man was so pointedly questioning them. Finally with a laugh he himself solved the problem and sending for a scullery maid told her to reply instead of the doctors. Without hesitation she gave the name.

Now you will also hear a third story. In the telling I will not use names. Someone who will not be identified presented to an outstanding Italian scholar a page torn from some book without the title that would reveal its author. The presenter advised the scholar that in his opinion the work was by some fairly recent writer. The Italian moreover was one of those who in their enthusiastic partiality for antiquity disdained everything modern. Thereupon the man, immediately offended by the foul style, as he then thought it, heaped much abuse on the barbarous writer for having misused paper and wasted it on such illiterate nonsense. His ridicule was unrestrained and only stopped when the other person revealed that the writing which he had damned with such vehemence was a fragment of Cicero. When apprised of this the learned man acknowledged with a laugh that his imagination was responsible for folly so arrant. The force of a preconceived notion is that strong even in a learned mind; no other factor in the making of judgments has greater power to distract or blind the intellect.

Consequently there is less cause for surprise if the same thing happens to us in the case of Jerome. We see on individual pages authorship ascribed to Jerome; we see mixed with these what is indisputably Jerome's. We hear that these *spuria* are cited here and there as Jerome's and that they are read and praised as his. Thus it is with a biased view that we take up our reading. But one who has been even casually alerted will immediately become aware of his error. And now like one aroused from sleep whose eyes have suddenly been opened he will be amazed at the delusion that so completely blinded him. But this is what causes me more indignation and amazement:

What notion, I ask, entered the mind of that impostor, if he had anything at all on his mind, to impel him to publish under another's name not one or two letters but many huge tomes? And he did not play this game only in the case of Jerome, but the same schemer is the true source of those homilies to the Eremite Friars under the name of Augustine and of other writings as well, of which with some very few exceptions he managed the ascription with appropriate detail. It is uncertain whether chance caused this admixture or (and this I think more likely) the craft of that fellow. It is the natural bent of liars, to be sure, to mingle some truth with their falsehoods to make their deception more plausible, which is also what that wretched Greek Sinon does in Virgil.[10] The same person composed a speech under the name of Ambrose, bishop of Milan, congratulating the Christian people on the baptism of Augustine. And not content with this, in the middle of the commentaries that St Jerome published on the prophets and the psalms he has intermingled his absurdities. We shall show this elsewhere in several places by citing specific passages. For the voice itself makes it clear that we have the same cuckoo. Or are we to think that, given the many forms of insanity that afflict mankind, the fellow had succumbed to the malady of believing his good fortune consisted in successfully deluding the world into acclaiming the inanities of a nincompoop as the work of men of surpassing excellence? For there are some whose propensity for deception is so natural that they take pleasure in deceiving even without profit to themselves, indeed even to their own detriment as well. Their love of deception is that strong. Would the impostor himself meanwhile have been enjoying the delusion of the reader and counting his pleasure worth the cost of his hard work?

Or is it more plausible to think that he was a man who wished his own writings to present an exposition of those renowned sacred teachers and at the same time foster piety? And to accomplish this with greater ease did he cover his own work with the mantle of a prestigious name? But what does it all amount to if not this: in passing off such tasteless inanities as the work of great authors he besplatters and stains men who are most brilliant in their own right. Then since he expresses ideas of the sort any servant girl might express, why did he have to have the recommendation of such distinguished names? If he had advanced new and startling ideas which nevertheless effectively contributed to the pursuit of piety, although in my opinion at least it is neither right for a saint to gain honour from falsehood nor for piety to have the advocacy of a lie, yet his deception perhaps could have been tolerated. It was a practice that, as is well known, even the ancient Christians had resorted to with some frequency. Consonant with the view of

Plato and Origen they did not reject the use of a falsehood employed for some important public good.[11]

But I will offer my own view and frankly say what I think is closest to the truth, with the stipulation that on this matter everyone nevertheless be free to judge. It is clear that our impostor belonged to that breed of men who are popularly called Augustinians sometimes and sometimes Eremites. For they would have the origin of their rule traced back to the Eremites of St Augustine so that, clearly, by virtue of its antiquity it might enjoy greater esteem.[12] We see however that about two hundred years ago the whole responsibility for copying books, especially sacred books, had devolved upon monks and nuns, so that today very many manuscripts are extant that have been copied or rather illuminated by the hands of consecrated virgins; and this was done to prevent so huge a throng of men and women from being supported free of charge or being corrupted by idleness or on the other hand from being occupied by the menial tasks of the common labourer since that seemed beneath the dignity of professed religious. Then among these, practically devoid of education as they were, there was, I think, some busybody with pretensions to learning who while copying books snatched up bits of knowledge. Now nature herself had endowed him with garrulity. We see that he suffered from a disease which today, fellow students of theology, also affects not a few, those who though they do not know how to write nevertheless cannot resist the compulsion to write. Partly to increase income from the constant stream of new volumes (for he was producing them at his monastery), partly to promote by his efforts greater respect among the common people for his own way of life (for it is amazing how excessive the zeal for this is in this entire breed of men), he clearly made use of the names of the most reputable men. And therefore in the life of Jerome that we are placing at the very end of this section he insists time and again that Jerome was an Eremite in order to add so distinguished a man to his flock. Then he attached to the name of Augustine many homilies to the Eremites, very elegant ones, indeed, although almost all the sermons of the ancients are usually concerned with the explication of Holy Scripture and not with the discussion of general topics. Finally – and this is the most charming of all – he invented a speech by Ambrose, beginning with the words 'What has happened in these days, my dear brothers.' In it he congratulates the Christian religion on the admission of a soldier so distinguished, namely, Augustine, and with wonderful skill the delightful fellow gives the impression that St Augustine had taken the black cowl and the leather belt from the very hands of Ambrose right at the moment of his baptism.[13] These were to be sure the distinctive attire of his profession, so that he might even claim Augustine completely for his own order; and he

falsely adds that the belt was the gift of Simplicianus.[14] He further mentions the story of a hymn sung antiphonally. Finally he makes the prediction that many rules for religious would originate with Augustine, although in the time of Ambrose the word 'religion' was not used in the sense in which it is now used by the uneducated crowd. Now I need not mention that the very emphasis he is so careful to place in the narrative itself on Augustine's self-attained learning, on the tears of Monica, on Simplicianus, on Adeodatus and Alypius raises the suspicion that deception was his aim.[15] How like Quintilian when he neatly turns against the stepmother herself the wall smeared everywhere by bloody hands and other corroborative evidence.[16] And although this view of mine, diligent reader, is strongly probable, I think, and close to certainty, yet it is not my intention to make it a subject for dispute with anyone.

Nor is it of prime importance to know the identity of the agent in this affair. Yet surely the whole business points to a man who was a most shameless ranter and sacrilegious impostor. It is common knowledge that he, whoever he was, had striven to present himself now as Jerome, now as Augustine, now as Ambrose, now as Cyril, now as Eusebius, now as this one, now as that one, recalling Vertumnus, so to speak, or Empusa or Proteus.[17] Although he is one and the same person he appears to us in different guises. And since he is incapable of achieving his ends either by eloquence in view of the abysmal imperfections of his style or by learning in view of the abysmal inadequacy of his knowledge or by sanctity of life in view of his chicanery, it is by falsely attributing authorship – this was easy to do – that he solves his problem. It is his belief that if he refers by name to Paula and Eustochium now and again he will pass as Jerome, and as Augustine if he repeats more than twenty times a page 'dearest brothers' because Augustine used the expression several times. The sly fellow also mixes in some history which indeed he even does in his homilies to the Eremites. But our man's style is so forced and frigid that the smell of deceit is readily detected, and Cicero's well-known remark immediately comes to mind: 'If misrepresentation were not your game, you would not be acting like an impostor, as you are.'[18] Moreover, as a centenarian he composed a rule for virgins,[19] and in the work this rascal, having meanwhile become a seer gifted with prophetic knowledge, spends an entire seven days in the company of angelic choirs and has lengthy converse with the Holy Trinity, at long last winging his way back to earth. What is more shameless than this hypocrisy? Indeed what is more ungodly? In the first place his very ignorance reveals that he was far different from what he was anxious to appear to be; in the second place the strange babble of his language, befouled by a host of expressions at once vulgar and vernacular, also reveals

him. And this is the surest indicator and, as a current expression has it, a Lydian stone.[20] You will find here nothing vigorous, nothing precise, nothing highly finished, but only a disordered mass of coarse words and the most absurd ideas. This also now clearly convicts the fellow: although there is a very great difference between the styles of Jerome, Ambrose, and Augustine, in his work everyone speaks in the same manner, and like the cuckoo he appears from time to time now covered with one kind of plumage, now with another, incapable in his ill fortune of changing that song which nature gave him. And like an actor disguised in various roles he comes before us on the stage in a succession of different characters, but the unchanging voice and bodily movement betray the spurious nature of the performance. For in his work this fellow has Cyril, who wrote Greek, using Latin – and Latin no different from Augustine's or Jerome's. He made clear, to be sure, that the desire to deceive did not fail him, only the power to deceive did. And all the rest the very justice of the case will make clear.

In answer to my prayers I would like the reader to grant me this one favour: not to shout down my judgment, not to cry out against it, not to confound and confuse everything until he has read through with some attention the pieces I have rejected. If in these writings whose authorship is assigned to St Jerome just one sentence should be found worthy of that man, I would not stand in the way of attributing everything to Jerome. But if the whole manner of expression from head to toe, as the saying goes, is so greatly at odds with every talent of Jerome, so contrary to every characteristic of his that there is more in common between a man and a camel, what sort of madness is it to put up with the mischief of seeing offered for sale that worthless stuff with a false attribution? This without exception is the greatest insult to a man of true greatness and to scholars. It is a good thing that learning did not reach such a mind. Good heavens, what if this impostor had acquired even a modicum of eloquence, if even a dollop of learning and talent had been his, enabling him to fashion some likeness of Jerome's style? Who, then, would have dared to rip out these writings from Jerome's corpus once they had been accepted? As it is, except for the attribution his ability to imitate those whose identity he assumes is so paltry that the gullible have, it seems, been deceived not by that impostor but by their own feelings. How many talents must he demonstrate who would pass as Jerome! In Augustine we find a certain flowery and picturesque quality, a Carthaginian quality, so to speak; in him we find a not unpleasant subtlety; in him we find those figures of his in which by his own admission in the *De doctrina christiana* he found delight.[21] St Ambrose recalls a certain intellectual keenness deriving from the school of rhetoric and titillates us with covert and frequent allusions. Not only is our Thespian incapable of imitating any

of these distinctive features, but he does not exhibit even semi-Latin speech or even intelligible or reasonable expression. And yet the shameless fellow did not hesitate to place the names of distinguished men at the head of the most insipid blather. So much confidence did either the ignorance of men or their indifference bestow on him. How sacrilegious the fellow was to harbour so strong an ambition to defile with his absurdities the hallowed works of men so great! How wicked his hope, which held out the promise that this utterly unlearned nonsense would be circulated under the names of celestial doctors! How lethargic of us, whose indifference made it possible for such an unholy endeavour of this impostor to succeed and for his tasteless nonsense to be read now over the course of so many years and cited under the names of heroes of surpassing distinction! And no one indeed will think that my remarks are excessively abusive. For it is not abuse to deprive the actor of his mask, but it is an act of piety to rescue the most saintly men and at the same time the diligent reader from the most undeserved abuse. It is not abuse to reveal the perpetrator of sacrilege, but it is a duty to look to the good name of men of superior worth. This is not to diminish the stature of Jerome but to purge the gold of the lead that debased it. The person who reads such trash as the work of Jerome neither loves Jerome nor understands his talents. And he is more than blind who does not perceive this and more than impious who though he perceives the truth yet can endure it.

The literary heritage left by the learned has always been considered among those things that are sacred, and because of this the ancients were wont to preserve books worthy of immortality by storing them in cedar chests in a temple of Apollo. Busts of authors were kept in libraries, and even now the library of Cicero at Puteoli is visited like a consecrated shrine. How much more fitting is it that we venerate the writings of Jerome, whose matchless learning and uncommon sanctity equally commend him! The Roman world considers him so pre-eminent a theologian that it considers him almost the only one. It is deemed a kind of sacrilege to handle the relics of the saints without sufficient reverence, for example, the girdle of Anne, the chalice of Edmund, the comb of George, or the shoe of Thomas.[22] These relics in our reverence we also kiss or apply to our eyes. How much veneration therefore is owed to the writings of so saintly a man, which offer us not his cap or headband but the living and still breathing image of his mind! From them the indwelling spirit of Christ gave forth those oracles to the world. Those mute letters on the page present to us what the living body of Jerome would not have presented. For what is so important in gazing on the figure of a man? Yes, it is in his works that I observe that unseen quality of mind; yes, in them, as I see it, there survives what was best in him. In them, as I see it, lives the complete Jerome teaching, exhorting, consoling

and, as it were, from the fire of his own mind inflaming the reader to piety.[23] These are truly the most holy relics of the saintly confessor. Does it not seem to be the height of impiety with unwashed feet as well as with unwashed hands[24] to pollute, defile, corrupt, and in every way to desecrate them? Everyone would call it a crime past atonement should the ashes of Sardanapalus[25] be exhibited for veneration instead of St John's. But it is a far more serious crime to introduce into the universal church the absurdities of an ignorant good-for-nothing to take the place of the timeless works of the most holy and learned of men. For in the former case indeed the wrong does little or no harm, since God in his goodness is wont to take into account the disposition in these matters and not the deed. But in the latter case I am deceived, and instead of salutary precepts my mind takes in the vagaries of a hypocrite. Everyone would consider it the height of impiety for a person to throw the robe of St Francis into the mud and trample on it. How much more irreligious is it to spoil, profane, and corrupt the wholesome writings of a peerless man with an admixture of twaddle introduced by an unknown good-for-nothing!

Irenaeus, Eusebius, and Rufinus, and very many others along with them, whenever they published a book used to entreat the scribe by all that was sacred not to change anything, not to add anything, not to omit anything, but to transcribe faithfully what he had found in the original manuscript. What kind of heinous sacrilege is this, I ask you, to mutilate all the books of a very holy man, as fancy dictated, to add to them, to confuse them, to corrupt them, to excise them, to alter them, and to rampage through them as is the wont of a wild boar in a wheat field. I myself – and I am nothing compared not only to Jerome but also to men of ordinary talents – would yet consider it an intolerable affront were anyone to publish under my name such trash of the kind this impostor ascribed to Jerome. The rules and regulations of princes and popes are numerous enough on matters of almost no importance. On this matter however, which has greater relevance to man's life than any other, be it for his edification or for his deterioration, there are no precautionary measures, no enforcement, no penalties, but just as physicians and pharmacists accept any name given to an herb by a little old woman who has brought it to them, and they prescribe it for their patients, we allow anything that has appealed to the copyists to prevail. So we read and accept a book with whatever attribution a copyist has published it. What risk this involves you may judge even from this. St Jerome enjoys the approval of a universal consensus as well as of papal authority. This makes it possible for a ranter to spread through the world under Jerome's name his own noxious opinions. But if Jerome brooks no opposition, and if any work at all that displays his name is considered genuine, either he who

voices his opposition will be considered an enemy of goodness or he who has read the work with approval will gulp down poison instead of medicine.

There now remains that one source of anxiety which harries those who expend more energy in sophistic controversies than in reading classical authors. These people possibly will complain that I am more than rash in rejecting certain writings, which, as a matter of fact, Gratian draws upon for frequent quotation in the pontifical decretals.[26] I might reply, as I have previously declared, that there has been acceptance of that work only because of its use by the schoolmen. There exists no evidence either to establish the identity of Gratian or the date of the publication of his work or the identity of the pope or council that ratified it. Indeed the story that is discussed in the schools about *palea* bears, I think, a very strong resemblance to the tale that is told in the glossaries of the *Pandects* about the exchange that took place between Diomede and Glaucus and about the laws that were sought from the Greeks.[27] Further, since in such a confused mass of material [as the *Decretum*] contradictory views such as one may expect to find in a disputation are frequently met, it behoves the reader not to accept immediately as gospel truth whatever he has found in that work. In it Isidore, a philologist who makes pronouncements on matters of profound importance, has a position of prominence.[28] As far as I know, his writing was confined to philology, and as a philologist his colleagues in the discipline look at him askance. Whoever the compiler [of the *Decretum*] was, whether Gratian or Crassian, he had, I think, the very special purpose in view of supplanting that ancient collection of decretals with a new one, intending at the same time, I believe, to enhance the reputation of his compatriot Isidore and certain other men of more recent times. On the other hand I list Bede among the truly learned.[29] That is why I have cautioned against the shock of astonishment if a book not by Jerome is cited among his writings by Gratian. For the man, born as he was in a barren age that produced little or nothing, was utterly lacking in the discipline and knowledge of ancient literature. This explains why when he cites testimony from the commentaries of Jerome, if he meets with anything which because of its antiquity or its admixture of Greek he has not understood, he often passes it by, even though it has more relevance than such treatment would suggest.

Finally it was possible for the supreme pontiff to err and for the highest papal court to go astray on these matters, matters, let me emphasize, which had no significance for the essentials of faith. For the Christian religion would not necessarily be imperilled if one should prefer to read the Gospel of Mark as that of Peter, whom some considered the author, or if one should prefer to assert Clement's authorship of the Pauline Epistle to the Hebrews.[30] It was the work itself above all that the church approved; about the

author she neither raises her voice nor engages in controversy. In addition many things here and there creep into popular usage either without the knowledge of the bishops or with their connivance, and then since it is well-nigh impossible to root them out they are condoned because of popular sentiment and are tolerated, it is truer to say, rather than approved. And I wish that the Roman pontiffs and the other bishops had enough leisure to enable them to devote as much study and care to matters pertaining to Christian learning as the subject itself deserves and the public weal demands. On this point I think that the discerning reader perceives what I am keeping silent about and leaving for unspoken reflection. For there is an advantage sometimes in leaving even the truth unsaid.

Moreover, to repeat remarks I have already made in an earlier preface, Gratian at that time was not discussing the authorship of the books he cites, whether Jerome's or another's.[31] Rather he mustered into his final line of argument evidence that seemed to confirm the case he was making. And since it is customary for jurists to cite by author's name he added the name he found by chance in the manuscript. Similarly, St Jerome too cited the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* as Cicero's. Yet if a dispute had arisen about this attribution, without doubt Jerome would have denied such a provenance for the work. Oftentimes it happens that we find in the same Gratian Origen's work cited as Jerome's or Augustine's work as Cyprian's, occurrences clearly of some frequency. When in [Jerome's] *Catalogue of Writers* we come across the substitution of Vincent for Juvencus or something similar – the kind of mistake to be assigned either to the author's errancy or the copyist's inattention – are we immediately disposed to judge that the trustworthiness of the author and the credibility of his entire work has been utterly compromised? Therefore the separation of this worthless stuff in no way, I think, concerns the truth of the Christian faith, but it does involve the reputation of Jerome, who did not deserve to have nonsense of this kind attributed to him and whose worth was above the praise of such a herald. And this is all to the advantage of the students whom I have kept from reading the insipid blather of an obscure wretch instead of the most learned writings of a very great man.

Further, there are some, I hear, who in their absurd fear voice the objection that the elimination of any accepted writings of the saintly Doctor would involve the risk of undermining the authority of Holy Scripture. Even if this objection should not be germane here, nonetheless it would not be amiss to offer a brief rebuttal. We are dealing not with Holy Scripture but with writings falsely ascribed to Jerome. If Holy Scripture were the primary concern one's anger would appropriately be directed not at the one who had exposed the false attribution but at the one who had introduced it. And

indeed the more sacred the writing and the more relevant it is to Christian piety the more wicked it is to corrupt it. Again, the graver the crime of the corruptor, the more the service of the restorer must be embraced. This is not to introduce the spurious into sacred literature but to remove it. There is no danger of debasing gold through the elimination of the dross by the goldsmith or of adulterating jewels through the removal of what is impure and meretricious. On the contrary, the authority of Holy Scripture will be enhanced by refusing to allow anything spurious or defective to remain in it – unless perchance we no longer believe the four Gospels because the church condemned the rest as full of fables. Or must we fear that the whole world will abandon Christ if I show that anything in sacred letters has been corrupted by ignorant or lazy copyists or improperly rendered by an inattentive translator? He believes nothing who believes anything, for his belief arises not from sound judgment but from light-minded frivolity. No one's belief in the Gospels has more validity than his whose belief is not accorded to all of them. No one reveres the sacred books more than the man who has separated the apocryphal from the truly sacred. Do you think that he holds Jerome in honour who is unwilling to distinguish between Jerome and a worthless wretch? Thus Pliny firmly believes that a book has given pleasure only if some displeasing elements have been discerned in it.[32] So strong is his conviction that approval can only be *critical* approval.

In an earlier preface sufficient evidence has been given, I think, to show that there is no class of writers who somewhere have not been contaminated by spurious works of this kind.[33] Will you really consider it pious and honest to permit any ignoramus to introduce whatever he pleases and corrupt whatever he pleases and not to permit students and scholars to reject the spurious and emend the corrupted? But you demand perhaps that this be done under the supervision of the bishops. Ridiculous! They feel no indignation at the impostor who without anyone's authority corrupts the sacred books; their anger is reserved for those who in the absence of the authority of the entire church correct what has been corrupted. We are not trying, however, to dictate to the princes of the church; rather we further their work with these efforts of ours, such as they are. Ours is to advise, not to decree; ours to give evidence, not to render judgment. And I have no doubt whatsoever that they above all will give full approval to my position on this matter. But it is highly offensive, people say, to upset what has been accepted now for so many centuries. Yet what had greater acceptance at one time than the text of the Septuagint? Jerome nevertheless was not afraid to correct it in his own translation, although some bishops including Augustine objected in vain. What story has been repeated more often than the one about the seventy cells?[34] Yet Jerome did not hesitate to call a falsehood the

tale which not only Augustine but everyone believed. Is any edition of the New Testament more widely known than Jerome's? And let me ask what loss was there to the substance of evangelical truth because Lorenzo Valla, a rhetorician rather than a theologian, found fault with some passages that were incorrectly translated?[35] Are the Pauline Epistles now read with a weaker faith because Jacques Lefèvre d'Etaples, a man esteemed no less for his upright life than for his learning, denied that the edition of these Epistles in general use was Jerome's or because in imitation of Valla he changed very many passages that were either corrupt or badly translated?[36] Indeed this subject also actively engaged my attention at the same time; and it was an amazing thing that we both were working simultaneously at this same task, even if Lefèvre's edition preceded mine, although neither of us was aware of what the other was doing. I wish that his edition had the quality to make the one I am preparing seem entirely unnecessary. I give all the credit in the world to Lefèvre as a man of uncommon learning; I revere him as a man of the highest integrity; I support him as the best of friends. But if Aristotle in profane matters deemed that truth rather than Plato's friendship must be the prime consideration,[37] it is far more appropriate that this rule obtain in the case of that literature we call sacred, not to say most sacred. I make this avowal not because I do not approve of Lefèvre's edition, but that I may be pardoned if anywhere I seem to differ with so distinguished a man.

But to return to our discussion: what has happened to the church in these recent days? Is the Christian world really tottering because Paul of Middelburg, bishop of Fossombrone, in published books confuted the common error about the reckoning of the date of Easter?[38] But if innovation in such important matters does not weaken church authority but in fact strengthens it, why are they so fearful that the heavens will fall if I have applied myself to the removal of illiterate nonsense from the most learned books of Jerome? And I wish I had been allowed to do in the other commentaries of Jerome what I did in the volumes of his letters. But if the sanction of authority is at all required, I labour at these tasks with the good will of many important personages, bishops of learning, who provide encouragement and incentive and not only approve my efforts but also support them with extraordinary generosity. First and foremost here is that unparalleled patron of my scholarly endeavours William Warham, archbishop of Canterbury and primate of all England. He is a man in whom every literary and moral virtue abides in such perfection that in him you admire the aggregation of superb qualities that you are hard put to find singly in others. Indeed he alone is more than adequate to represent as in a painting all the endowments of the perfect bishop. Nor will others be cheated out of praise rightly theirs. But now the reader must not be burdened by a preface

that is longer than needful. I shall add only this. Pope Leo, supreme pontiff in every respect, was informed long ago about this work of mine, and that not only by my letters but also by those of many distinguished persons, and I expect that he, at once a most learned and excellent man, will not only give the sanction of his office to my efforts but will also honour them with the most ample rewards.[39]

I confess that I have argued my case at greater length than the standard for prologues allows. But I have left nothing untried, no stone unturned, to give satisfaction to everyone, since people are either offended or won over by different things. But if there is anyone still to be found either so stupid or so hostile to his own self or so corrupted by long-standing habit that he wishes to waste his good time on this blather, not even he will have cause to be angry with me. Through my efforts he has everything included in previous editions and this far more correct than hitherto, and some things have even been added that were not in the earlier editions. I was so careful not to offend anyone that I took pains to accommodate the learned and the unlearned alike, the reasonable and unreasonable, the hopeless as well as those whose talents show promise. I bid you farewell, dear reader.

Basel, August 1515[40]

William Warham
Portrait drawing by Hans Holbein the Younger, 1527
Windsor Castle; reproduced by gracious permission of
Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

PREFACE TO VOLUME II (1524)

TO THE MOST REVEREND FATHER IN CHRIST WILLIAM WARHAM,
LORD ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY,
LEGATUS NATUS OF THE APOSTOLIC SEE,
PRIMATE OF ALL ENGLAND,
FROM DESIDERIUS ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, GREETING

Whatever related to the principles of the Christian life, since this must be our first care, I have collected in the first volume, arranged by order of subject-matter, with the more perfect Christian first and descending by gradual stages to the lower levels, then to lapsed Christians, and finally to the awful warnings. The catalogue of authors I have added as a kind of appendix to a volume which by itself was rather thin, for I could see no more suitable place for it elsewhere. And at this present moment I shall pass over what in the first edition I had collected in the second volume, since none of it belonged there and some of it was simply not worth reading, and this volume will contain two classes of material not unrelated, the refutative and the defensive. In the first part are the refutations of heretics and in the second the replies to scurrilous attacks, in both of which Jerome is powerful and spirited and sometimes writes with such heat and such a torrent of obloquy and biting words that some people might think he had forgotten the mildness proper to a Christian. But to put a favourable interpretation on this will be easy for anyone who will consider the man's fiery and essentially forceful nature, which is outspoken rather than malignant, and besides that his very high character and blameless life; for such a character, while it does no man an injury, is often intolerant of injuries done to itself. Besides which, let him remember that the charge of heresy is too outrageous to be tolerated even by a man of the sweetest natural disposition, to say nothing of that intense conviction in which he so far surpassed all his contemporaries that even to compare him with any of the rest would be an insult. To which I would add that there is also something about the imputation of heresy which means that, while in all other contexts to suffer in silence is a virtue, to overlook it here would be irreligious.

Again, this whole age in which St Jerome lived was an incredible hotbed of heretical discord and confusion, such that in those days it needed some special gifts even to be a Christian. So many were the names, the nicknames, and the tenets of the leading heretics that scholars have found it hard work even to list them. But the Cataphrygians, the Borborites, the

Ophites, the Basilidians, the Manichaeans,[1] and other heretics resembling them, following as they did a sort of nightmare of hallucinations rather than doctrines, not only remote from Scripture but in hopeless conflict with the instinctive feelings of mankind as well, fell easily into senility as though in the course of nature. But the Arian heresy, strongly defended in writing and relying on what seemed impregnable support from Holy Scripture too, not to mention the backing both political and financial of emperors and whole peoples, rocked Christendom with perilous upheavals; so much so that it was long in doubt which way the uncommitted church would turn, and it was more a political movement or a schism than heresy, because the enemy were almost equal in number, and in literary gifts and learning they were superior.[2]

This pestilence, having somehow been laid at length to rest, was reborn in the school of Origen, a change of name but the same evil thing, only more serious, like some recurring pestilence that often attacks more pitilessly those who have relapsed.[3] A bitter struggle was waged against it with synods and decretals and even with a hundred creeds, in no way the most appropriate weapons in my opinion with which to suppress heresy, unless there is authority behind them all; for without authority the greater the flow of dogma, the more plenteous the material of which heresies are made. Never was the Christian faith so pure, so simple, so inviolate as when the world was happy with a single creed and that a very short one. But in the age of which I speak that faith was found on paper rather than in men's hearts, and there were almost as many creeds as there were believers. As often happens, private ambition took a hand, and godless rivalries were pursued under a colouring of the faith. Nor did any evil bring closer to disaster the see of Peter, always unchallenged hitherto, which was at least shaken and weakened, though not overthrown; for under Pope Liberius Rome was not altogether free from Arian errors, and under the emperor Constantius it maintained a dubious hold upon that rock on which rests the Catholic church.[4] Above all however it was the East and the whole of Greece that were seething with these troubles; for the greater their admiration for the genius of Origen, the more the Greeks resented the condemnation of the opinions of that incomparable man, just as great physical passion sometimes takes delight even in the defects of the beloved.

All these upheavals so affected our hero Jerome that he was nowhere left in peace or given leisure to pursue his studies. Thanks to Rufinus, he was even suspected and falsely accused of heresy, because at one time as a great admirer of Origen's genius he had translated some of his work for readers of Latin and even praised the author. What exposed him yet more to

the attacks of his critics was the wide range of his work. The quality of his scholarship aroused envy; many people resented the exceptional severity of his regime, and even more the freedom with which he criticized the faults of his fellow men. Truth hurts, and everyone with a bad conscience thinks himself the target. Thus it came about that to the very end of his life this most saintly of men had to battle with the viper of malignity, which raved at him so furiously with tongue and pen that some were found to circulate a letter purporting to be written by Jerome himself in which he lamented that he had at one time been a follower of the errors of Origen.

Whom will you offer me so meek by nature that when harassed by such treatment as this he does not take fire? And yet, anyone who closely examines and assesses the books in which he seems to attack personal targets without restraint, Vigilantius for instance or Rufinus or Jovinian, will find there is much more wit than gall beneath the surface, and in the full flood of invective will discover clear traces of a most civilized mind. In the comedies, when Demea, unlike his normal self, wants to be courteous and cheerful, there is a touch of boorish bitterness all the same even in his pleasantries; on the other hand, when Micio goes against his nature, which is kindly, in reproving Aeschinus, there is much gentleness even in his severity.[5] There is nothing more honey-sweet than Christian charity, which, when it is most severe, retains its native sweetness and modifies wine's medicinal astringency with the blandness of oil. As Cicero, again, is nowhere more to be admired as an orator than when resentment has, as it were, struck spurs into his powerful eloquence, so does St Jerome – always so well read, always so eloquent – yet never speak better than when he is denouncing heresy or misrepresentation, if one can describe as denunciation what is spirited defence of the truth.

My first volume therefore showed us Jerome the master of eloquence; this one will show his lightning and his thunder. The first established his outstanding sanctity of life; the second will establish his indomitable courage in the face of all the assaults of evil men. So nature has provided that exceptional merit will not show its full brilliance until put through its paces by adversity, like gold that comes refined out of the furnace, or 'the dark oak with cruel axes trimmed' that shoots again with a thicker growth of branches and, as Horace puts it, 'gains strength and spirit from the knife itself.'[6] The skill and courage of a ship's master are made clear in storms. No one was ever rated a great general whose valour has not been displayed in adversity. If it is proper to bring the myths of the ancients into a serious context, when Juno exposed Hercules to every kind of danger, all she achieved was to make his courage famous and secure divine honours for her victim. In the same

way the Lord allowed his brave servant Job to be tempted by Satan, that through him he might provide us with an example of invincible patience; in the same way he tested his beloved Abraham, that the world might recognize a supreme example of man's confidence in God. Nor should we recognize Jerome's greatness, had it not been polished into brilliance by the calumnies of heretics and detractors.

And so, most reverend prelate, if in the different and difficult kinds of business in which you are engaged your life has continued its unbroken tenor down to the old age, green and flourishing as it is, which has been your happy lot, without involving you in any tragic troubles of this kind, some might perhaps give the credit for this to your integrity and your prudence; but I would rather give the credit to the favour of heaven, to which you owe all those gifts of mind and heart. And yet the difficulties needed to bring out that high steadiness of purpose allied with integrity to match it were not entirely lacking. It is a most difficult thing, and in dignity very close to the throne, to play the part of chancellor in England. And though your conduct of that office was such as to make the task very difficult for your successor, however distinguished he might be, yet I doubt whether the way you laid down your office did not display your high character even more clearly than your conduct of it.[7] Could any man step down from a position so exalted without regretting it? Could any man not be jealous of his successor? But you, after fulfilling the duties of that most distinguished office without a trace of pride, laid it down so entirely without any sign of regret as to make it obvious to all men that you had accepted office not for your own advantage but for the public good, so readily did you lay down, given an honourable opportunity, the burden which had brought you so much honour. You thought it an immense advantage that the time which was saved from almost entirely secular business could be devoted to the sacred studies in which a bishop should be constantly engaged. For you did not allow yourself to lose any of the time that was meant for them, even in the days when you were overrun by so many great waves of public business.

But I will bring this letter to an end, once I have recounted my experiences as I reread Jerome's works; they are much the same as one has when looking at pictures. A picture of moderate quality is quite attractive on first inspection; if you study it more often, more closely, and more at leisure, it gradually loses its attraction. On the other hand, a painting by a distinguished artist becomes more and more admirable the more often and more attentively you look at it. Jerome was a favourite in my adolescence,[8] he was a favourite when I reached man's estate; but never have I enjoyed him more than during this rereading. In heaven's name, how utterly I am dissatisfied with myself as I watch this man's personal holiness breathing in

all he writes, his burning zeal, his astonishing knowledge of the Scriptures, and his prodigious memory! Think of such powers of expression and such intellectual force in a man so far gone in years! It is to your generosity that all lovers of religious literature owe the privilege of reading Jerome with the errors removed and notes added, not merely legible but intelligible; their debt will now be the greater, for they have him better presented in every way. Farewell, most noble of prelates.

From Basel, 1 June 1524

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SELECTIONS FROM JEROME'S LETTERS WITH ERASMUS' COMMENTARIES

This section contains Erasmus' notes and comments on six key letters of St Jerome, along with the letters themselves in the English translation of W.H. Fremantle.[1] Jerome's 'letters' include a variety of writings – polemical treatises, prefaces to books of Holy Scripture, and other works – as well as correspondence in the conventional sense. We have selected six from the latter group to illustrate how Erasmus dealt with this important segment of Jerome's work. Erasmus' order and organization of these letters in combination with other writings of Jerome differ entirely, however, from the chronological order and enumeration of the correspondence in Migne and Fremantle.[2] In our headnotes for the letters chosen we have indicated their location in Erasmus' 1516 edition as well as the standard numbers that have been given them. The letters are certainly important in their own right, and we must have them on hand to give the occasion and context of what Erasmus wrote. Our focus, however, is on Erasmus' annotation and commentary.

Erasmus' notes and comments are of several different kinds. He captioned each of the letters and (except for the *spuria*) introduced them with a brief summary or *argumentum*. The richest part of his commentary is the annotations or *scholia* appended to each of the letters (and to the other writings in volumes 1, 3, and 4 of the 1516 edition). At the end of a set of annotations Erasmus sometimes adds a short critical essay or comment that he calls an *antidotus* and that for want of a better term we have simply titled an antidote. The first letter in the edition (as well as in our volume) – an early one addressed to Heliodorus that Erasmus praised as 'the epitome of all the rules' for a letter of its type in *De conscribendis epistolis*[3] – has a second set of annotations dealing with its rhetorical features. This is the only commentary of its kind in Erasmus' edition. In volume 2 of the 1516 edition (volume 4 in later editions), where Erasmus relegated works wrongly attributed to Jerome, these spurious writings are prefaced by *censurae* in which Erasmus comments critically on their authorship.[4] There are no other annotations in this volume.

We have already spoken of the nature of Erasmus' annotations in our introduction and have given a few examples of his more pungent comments.[5] Erasmus in his dedicatory letter to Archbishop Warham explained his purpose in providing summaries and notes:

> I have added a summary to each treatise or letter, opening the door, as it were, to those who wish to enter. And then, since not everyone is blessed with such wide linguistic and literary knowledge, I have thrown light on anything that might hold up a reader of modest attainments by adding notes, hoping to achieve a double purpose: first, to make such an eminent author, who hitherto

> could not be read even by men of great learning, accessible to those whose learning is but small, and second, that it may not be so easy in future for anyone to corrupt what other men have restored.[6]

His annotations were intended to aid and enlighten the reader and to help preserve the restored text, but we cannot fail to point out again that his notes also gave him an opportunity to express himself freely and critically – and often sharply and controversially – on matters close to his heart. For example, in an annotation on a passage that declared that 'at that time the bishops of the East and West had been summoned to Rome by letter from the emperors' Erasmus wrote:

> It is surprising that in St Jerome's time the authority of the emperors was still so great at Rome that the bishops of the East and West were assembled by their letter and not instead by that of the Roman pontiff, especially since Constantine had already turned over power [*imperium*] to Sylvester, if the report is true. But in another letter Jerome affirmed that once all bishops were equal to one another.[7]

The annotation raises the question of papal authority and of the Donation of Constantine, but it is the last sentence that cuts deepest. Interestingly, that sentence was deleted in the 1524 and 1533 editions.[8]

Erasmus constantly revised what he wrote, adding, deleting, correcting, changing, modifying words, sentences, and sometimes longer portions in his text. The annotations offer examples of every type of revision. The deletion we have just mentioned was clearly dictated by the Reformation controversy involving papal primacy and authority that raged after 1517, as was a similar alteration, the addition in 1524 of a qualifying 'in my opinion (*ut arbitror*)' to a controversial note on a reference to the rock of Peter in Jerome's first letter to Pope Damasus.[9] Most interestingly, in 1533 a lengthy account of a meeting between Erasmus and a bumptious Franciscan theologian was deleted from an annotation appended to Jerome's letter to Paulinus of Nola.[10] Erasmus relates 'a very humorous incident,' as he calls it (a story worthy of P.G. Wodehouse in its circumstances as well as in its telling),[11] but at the later date it had evidently become too sensitive a matter to recount. Corrections were also frequently made, and two important ones will be found in this volume. One is Erasmus' revision of his elucidation of the confusing term 'the second-first Sabbath' in Jerome's letter to Nepotian.[12] The other is a very curious double correction, the first in 1524, the second in 1533, of his understanding of the word *basternae*, a word meaning litters or sedan chairs, which Jerome used in the famous letter to Eustochium.[13]

Erasmus first thought it meant a variety of edible bird and then that it was the name of a barbarian tribe. It was not until his 1533 edition that he gave an accurate explanation.

Erasmus from the start had intended not only to edit Jerome but also to elucidate and comment on his letters. This undertaking, as we have indicated, was his first major enterprise, and several letters from 1500 and 1501 clearly explain his purpose.[14] Some of his notes undoubtedly date from this early period. Beatus Rhenanus, who worked with him at the Froben press, tells us they did. In his life of Erasmus, describing the great scholar's role in the preparation of the Jerome edition he wrote:

> But he particularly claimed the volumes of letters for himself and occupied himself in part in completing the annotations [*scholia*], which he had already begun a long time before, and in part in adding new annotations and summaries [*argumenta*].[15]

We also know that Erasmus worked extensively on Jerome when he was at Cambridge in 1511–14.[16] In July 1514 when he was *en route* from England to Basel he wrote to Servatius Rogerus, his prior at Steyn, that in the previous two years he had been emending Jerome's letters and elucidating the obscure parts in his notes.[17] We have few specific details about this, however, nor can we actually date any of the annotations with certainty from internal evidence. There are no manuscripts of Erasmus' early work on them. There are a great number of *scholia* as well as other parts of the Jerome edition in manuscript in the University Library in Basel.[18] It is a rich and impressive collection and very instructive regarding Erasmus' working methods, but all of it – *scholia vetera*, finished drafts, and Erasmus' doodles – dates from the Basel period.[19]

In the following letters of Jerome Erasmus' annotations or *scholia* are cued to phrases that appear in bold type. For the first letter Erasmus provides two sets, as we mentioned. We have titled the first set 'Annotations,' the second 'Rhetorical Commentary.' Phrases followed by a superscript 'a' are discussed in the annotations; those followed by a superscript 'b' are discussed in the rhetorical commentary. Our own notes are limited to Erasmus' commentary or *scholia* and are at the back of the book. We have not annotated Jerome's text.

LETTER 1

JEROME INVITES HIS FRIEND HELIODORUS TO THE DESERT[1]

This is the first letter in Erasmus' edition (HO I 1–5, with Erasmus' summary, annotations, rhetorical commentary, and antidote). The letter is Ep 14 in PL, Fremantle, and Hilberg. Jerome is pleading and arguing with Heliodorus to join him as a monk in the Syrian desert. Heliodorus had accompanied Jerome to the East but had changed his mind about following the solitary life and returned to Italy.

A summary of the following letter by Erasmus of Rotterdam, theologian[2]

When St Jerome had gone to the desert he tried to keep with him his dearest friend Heliodorus, who out of a sense of duty had accompanied him, as he testifies elsewhere. Failing in this endeavour he wrote him a letter urging him to join him in the solitary life. He refutes several considerations which could either keep him from the desert or detain him in a city. And he shows him how it is not safe to undertake the office of bishop and how it is not easy to keep that office safe once undertaken. Then as in a peroration he sings over and over the joys of the hermit life, and he portrays for him the terror of the Last Judgment. He mentions this letter by name in the catalogue of his works and calls it a hortatory letter. He wrote this when quite young, little more than a boy, as he testifies in the next letter,[3] adding that in this letter he had played with the flowery language of the schools, still fired with enthusiasm for rhetorical studies, youth that he was. Accordingly it abounds with metaphors, allegories, even fictitious in origin, and with the oratorical ornaments of exclamation, dilemma, and other figures of that sort. His efforts show the kind of artistry in which one can recognize a beginner, but a beginner of the highest promise. The subject-matter belongs to the hortatory genre, which we will discuss a little later.

Text of Jerome's letter

1 **So conscious**[ab] are you of the affection which exists between us that you cannot but recognize the love and passion with which I strove to prolong our common sojourn

in the desert. This very letter – **blotted with tears**[a] – gives evidence of the lamentation and weeping with which I accompanied your departure. With the pretty ways of a child you then softened your refusal by soothing words, and I, being off my guard, knew not what to do. **Was I to hold my peace**?[b] I could not conceal my eagerness by a show of indifference. Or was I to entreat you yet more earnestly? You would have refused to listen, for your love was not like mine. Despised affection has taken the one course open to it. Unable to keep you when present, it goes in search of you when absent. You asked me yourself, when you were going away, to invite you to the desert when I took up my quarters there, and I for my part promised to do so. Accordingly **I invite you now; come, and come quickly**.[b] **Do not call to mind old ties**;[ab] the desert is for those who have left all. Nor let the hardships of our former travels deter you. You believe in Christ, believe also in his words: 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God and all these things shall be added unto you.' Take neither scrip nor staff. **He is rich enough**[ab] who is poor – with Christ.

2 **But what is this**,[b] and why do I foolishly importune you again? Away with entreaties, an end to coaxing words. **Offended love does well to be angry**.[b] You have spurned my petition; perhaps you will listen to my remonstrance. **What keeps you, effeminate soldier**,[b] **in your father's house**?[b] Where are your **ramparts and trenches**?[a] When have you spent a winter **in the field**?[a] Lo, the trumpet sounds from heaven! Lo, the leader comes with the clouds! He is armed to subdue the world, and out of his mouth proceeds a two-edged sword to mow down all that encounters it. But as for you, what will you do? Pass straight **from your chamber to the battlefield**,[b] and from the cool shade into the burning sun? Nay, a body **used to a tunic**[a] cannot endure a buckler; **a head that has worn a cap**[a] refuses a helmet; a hand made tender by disuse is **galled by a sword-hilt**.[a] **Hear the proclamation**[b] of your king: 'He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth.' **Remember the day**[a] **on which you enlisted**,[a] when, **buried with Christ in baptism**,[a] you swore **fealty to him**,[a] declaring that for his sake you would spare neither father nor mother. **Lo, the enemy**[b] is striving to slay Christ in your breast. Lo, the ranks of the foe sigh over that bounty which you received when you entered his service. **Should your little nephew**[a] **hang on your neck**,[b] pay no regard to him; should your mother with ashes on her hair and garments rent show you the breasts at which she nursed you, heed her not; should your father prostrate himself on the threshold, trample him under foot and go your way. With dry eyes fly **to the standard of the cross**.[b] In such cases cruelty is **the only true affection**.[ab]

3 Hereafter **there shall come – yes, there shall come**[ab] – a day when you will return a victor to your true country, and **will walk**[b] through **the heavenly Jerusalem**[b] crowned with **the crown**[b] of valour. Then will you receive the citizenship thereof with Paul. Then will you seek the like privilege for your parents. Then will you intercede for me who have urged you forward on the path of victory.

I am not ignorant[ab] of the fetters which you may plead as hindrances. My breast is not of iron nor my heart of stone. I was **not born of flint**[a] or suckled by a tigress. I have passed through troubles like yours myself. **Now it is a widowed sister**[ab] who throws her caressing arms around you. Now it is **the slaves, your foster-brothers,**[a] who cry, 'To what master are you leaving us?' Now it is a nurse bowed with age, and a body-servant loved only less than a father, who exclaim: 'Only **wait till we die**[a] and are buried.' Perhaps, too, an aged mother, with sunken bosom and furrowed brow, **recalling**[a] the lullaby with which she once soothed you, **adds her entreaties**[a] to theirs. **The learned may call you,**[a] if they please, 'the sole support and pillar of your house.' The love of God and the fear of hell will **easily break**[b] such bonds.

Scripture, you will argue,[b] bids us obey our parents. Yes, **but whoso**[b] loves them more than Christ loses his own soul. The enemy takes sword in hand to slay me, and shall I think of a mother's tears? Or shall I desert the service of Christ **for the sake of a father**[b] **to whom, if I am Christ's servant, I owe no rites of burial,**[a] albeit if I am Christ's true servant I owe these to all? Peter with his cowardly advice was an offence to **the Lord on the eve of his passion;**[b] and to the brethren who strove to restrain him from going up to Jerusalem, Paul's one answer was: 'What mean ye to weep and to break my heart? For I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.' **The battering-ram of natural affection**[ab] which so often shatters faith must recoil powerless from the wall of the gospel. '**My mother**[b] and my brethren are those whosoever do the will of my Father which is in heaven.' **If they believe in Christ**[ab] let them bid me Godspeed, for I go to fight in his name. And if they do not believe, 'let the dead bury their dead.'

4 **But all this, you argue, only touches the case of martyrs.**[b] Ah! **my brother, you are mistaken,**[b] you are mistaken, if you suppose that there is ever a time when the Christian does not suffer persecution. Then are you most hardly beset when you know not that you are beset at all. 'Our adversary as a roaring lion walketh about seeking whom he may devour,' and do you think of peace? 'He sitteth in the lurking-places of the villages: in the secret places doth he murder the innocent; his eyes are privily set against the poor. He lieth in wait secretly as a lion in his den; he lieth in wait to catch the poor;' and do you slumber under a shady tree, so as to fall an easy prey? **On one side self-indulgence presses me hard;**[a] on another covetousness strives to make an inroad; my belly wishes to be a God to me, in place of Christ, and **lust would fain drive away**[a] the Holy Spirit that dwells in me and defile his temple. I am pursued, I say, by an enemy – '**A thousand names**[a] are yours, a thousand ways of wounding' – and, hapless wretch that I am, how shall I hold myself a victor when I am being led away a captive?

5 **My dear brother,**[b] weigh well the various forms of transgression, and think not

that the sins which I have mentioned are less flagrant than that of idolatry. Nay, hear the Apostle's view of the matter. 'For this ye know,' he writes, 'that no whoremonger or unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.' In a general way all that is of the devil savours of enmity to God, and what is of the devil is idolatry, since all idols are subject to him. Yet Paul elsewhere lays down the law in express and unmistakable terms, saying: 'Mortify your members, which are upon the earth, laying aside fornication, uncleanness, evil concupiscence and covetousness, which are idolatry, for which things' sake the wrath of God cometh.'

Idolatry is not confined[b] to casting incense upon an altar with finger and thumb, or to pouring libations of wine out of a cup into a bowl. **Covetousness**[b] is idolatry, or else the selling of the Lord for thirty pieces of silver was a righteous act. Lust involves profanation, or else men may defile with **common harlots**[a] those **members of Christ**[a] which should be 'a living sacrifice acceptable to God.' Fraud is idolatry, or else they are worthy of imitation who, in the Acts of the Apostles, sold their inheritance, and because they kept back part of the price, perished by an instant doom. Consider well, my brother; nothing is yours to keep. 'Whosoever he be of you,' **the Lord says**,[b] 'that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.' Why are you such a half-hearted Christian?

6 See how Peter left his net; see how the publican rose from **the receipt of custom**.[a] In a moment he became an apostle. 'The Son of man hath not where to lay his head,' and do you plan wide porticos and spacious halls? **If you look to inherit**[b] the good things of the world you can no longer be a joint heir with Christ.' You are called a monk, and **has the name no meaning**?[b] What brings you, a solitary, into the throng of men? **The advice that I give**[b] is that of no inexperienced mariner who has never lost either ship or cargo, and has never known a gale. Lately shipwrecked as I have been myself, my warnings to other voyagers spring from my own fears. On one side, **like Charybdis**,[a] self-indulgence sucks into its vortex the soul's salvation. On the other, **like Scylla**,[a] lust, with a smile on her girl's face, lures it on to wreck its chastity. The coast is savage, and the devil with a crew of pirates carries irons to fetter his captives. Be not credulous, be not over-confident. The sea may be as smooth and smiling as a pond, its quiet surface may be scarcely ruffled by a breath of air, yet sometimes its waves are as high as mountains. There is danger in its depths, the foe is lurking there. Ease your sheets, spread your sails, fasten the cross as an ensign on your prow. **That calm that you speak of is itself a tempest**:[b] **'Why so?'**[b] you will perhaps argue; 'are not all my fellow townsmen Christians?' Your case, I reply, is not that of others. Listen to the words of the Lord: 'If thou wilt be perfect go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and come and follow me.' You have already promised to be perfect. For when you forsook the army and made yourself a eunuch for the kingdom of heaven's sake, you did so that you might follow the perfect life. Now the

perfect servant of Christ has nothing besides Christ. Or if he have anything besides Christ he is not perfect. And if he be not perfect when he has promised God to be so, his profession is a lie. But 'the mouth that lieth slayeth the soul.' To conclude, then, if you are perfect you will not set your heart on your father's goods; and if you are not perfect you have deceived the Lord. The gospel thunders forth its divine warning: 'Ye cannot serve two masters,' and does any one dare to make Christ a liar by serving at once both God and mammon? Repeatedly does he proclaim, 'If any one will come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.' If I load myself with gold can I think that I am following Christ? Surely not. 'He that saith that he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk even as he walked.'

7 I know you will rejoin that you possess nothing. Why, then, if you are so well prepared for battle, do you not take the field? Perhaps you think that *you* can wage war in your own country, although the Lord could do no signs in his? **Why not**?[a] you ask. Take the answer which comes to you with his authority: 'No prophet is accepted in his own country.' But, you will say, I do not seek honour; the approval of my conscience is enough for me. Neither did the Lord seek it; for when the multitudes would have made him a king he fled from them. **But where there is no honour**[b] there is contempt; and where there is contempt there is frequent rudeness; and where there is rudeness there is vexation; and where there is vexation there is no rest; and where there is no rest the mind is apt to be diverted from its purpose. Again, where, through restlessness, earnestness loses any of its force, it is lessened by what it loses, and that which is lessened cannot be called perfect. The upshot of all which is that a monk cannot be perfect in his own country. Now, not to aim at perfection is itself a sin.

8 Driven from this line of defence you will appeal to the example of the clergy. These, you will say, remain in their cities, and yet they are surely above criticism. Far be it from me to censure the successors of the apostles, who with holy words consecrate the body of Christ, and who make us Christians. Having the keys of the kingdom of heaven, they judge men to some extent before the day of judgment, and guard the chastity of the bride of Christ. But, as I have before hinted, the case of monks is different from that of the clergy. **The clergy feed Christ's sheep**;[b] I as a monk am fed by them. They live of the altar: I, if I bring no gift to it, have the axe laid to my root as to that of a barren tree. Nor can I plead poverty as an excuse, for the Lord in the gospel has praised an aged widow for casting into the treasury the last two coins that she had. I may not sit in the presence of a presbyter; he, if he sin, may deliver me to Satan, 'for the destruction of the flesh that the spirit may be saved.' **Under the old law**[a] he who disobeyed the priests was put outside the camp and stoned by the people, or else he was beheaded and expiated his contempt with his blood. But now the disobedient person is cut down with the spiritual sword, or he is expelled from the church and torn to pieces by ravening demons. Should the entreaties of your brethren induce you to take orders, I shall rejoice that you are lifted

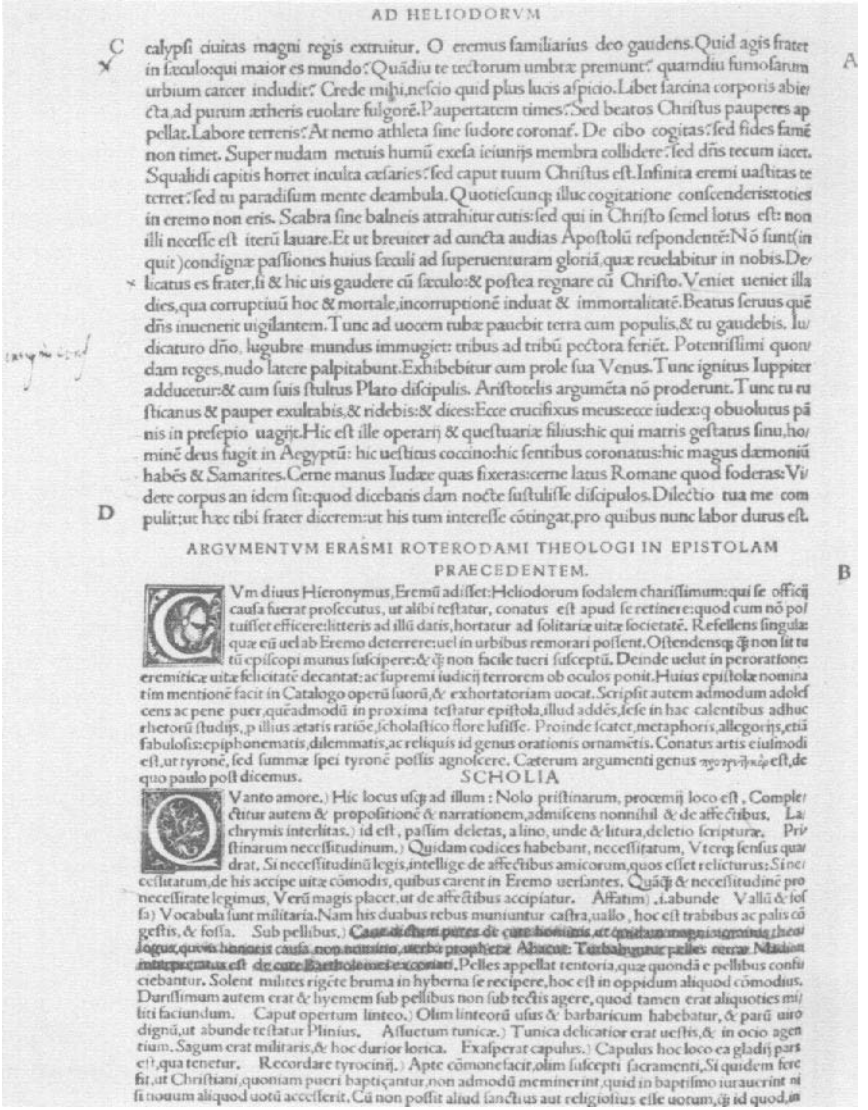
up, and fear lest you may be cast down. You will say: 'If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.' I know that; but you should add what follows: such a one 'must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, chaste, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach, not given to wine, no striker but patient.' After fully explaining the qualifications of a bishop the Apostle speaks of ministers of the third degree with equal care. 'Likewise must the deacons be grave,' he writes, 'not double-tongued, not given to much wine, **not greedy of filthy lucre**,[a] holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. And let these also first be proved; then, let them minister, being found blameless.' Woe to the man who goes in to the supper without a wedding garment. Nothing remains for him but the stern question, 'Friend, how camest thou in hither?' And when he is speechless the order will be given, 'Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' Woe to him who, when he has received a talent, has bound it in a napkin; and, whilst others make profits, only preserves what he has received. His angry lord shall rebuke him in a moment. 'Thou wicked servant,' he will say, 'wherefore gavest thou not my money into the bank that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury?' That is to say, you should have laid before the altar what you were not able to bear. For whilst you, a slothful trader, keep a penny in your hands, you occupy the place of another who might double the money. Wherefore, as he who ministers well **purchases to himself a good degree**,[a] so he who approaches the cup of the Lord unworthily shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

9 **Not all bishops**[a] are bishops indeed. You consider Peter; mark Judas as well. **You notice Stephen**;[a] look also on Nicolas, sentenced in the Apocalypse by the Lord's own lips, whose shameful imaginations gave rise to **the heresy of the neophytes**.[a] 'Let a man examine himself and so let him come.' For it is not ecclesiastical rank that makes a man a Christian. The centurion Cornelius was still a heathen when he was cleansed by the gift of the Holy Spirit. Daniel was but a child when he judged the elders. **Amos was stripping mulberry bushes**[a] when, in a moment, he was made a prophet. David was only a shepherd when he was chosen to be king. And the least of his disciples was the one whom Jesus loved the most. My brother, sit down in the lower room, that when one less honourable comes you may be bidden to go up higher. Upon whom does the Lord rest but upon him that is lowly and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at his word? To whom God has committed much, of him he will ask the more. 'Mighty men shall be mightily tormented.' No man need pride himself in the day of judgment on merely physical chastity, for then shall men give account for every idle word, and the reviling of a brother shall be counted as the sin of murder. Paul and Peter now reign with Christ, and it is not easy to take the place of the one or to hold the office of the other. There may come an angel **to rend the veil**[a] of your temple, and to remove your candlestick out of its place. If you intend to build the tower, first count the cost. Salt that has lost its savour is good for nothing but to be

cast out and to be trodden under the foot of swine. If a monk fall, a priest shall intercede for him; but who shall intercede for a fallen priest?

10 **At last my discourse is clear of the reefs**;[b] at last this frail bark has passed from the breakers into deep water. I may now spread my sails to the breezes; and, as I leave the rocks of controversy astern, **my epilogue**[a] will be like **the joyful shout of mariners**.[a] O desert, bright with the flowers of Christ! O solitude whence came the stones of which, **in the Apocalypse**,[a] the city of the great king is built! O wilderness, gladdened with God's especial presence! What keeps you in the world, my brother, you who are above the world? How long shall gloomy roofs oppress you? How long shall smoky cities immure you? Believe me, I have more light than you. Sweet it is to lay aside the weight of the body and to soar into the pure bright ether. **Do you dread poverty**?[b] Christ calls the poor blessed. Does toil frighten you? No athlete is crowned but in the sweat of his brow. Are you anxious as regards food? Faith fears no famine. Do you dread the bare ground for limbs wasted with fasting? The Lord lies there beside you. Do you recoil from an unwashed head and uncombed hair? Christ is your true head. Does the boundless solitude of the desert terrify you? In the spirit you may walk always in paradise. Do but turn your thoughts thither and you will be no more in the desert. Is your skin rough and scaly because you no longer bathe? He that is once washed in Christ needeth not to wash again. To all your objections the Apostle gives this one brief answer: 'The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory' which shall come after them, 'which shall be revealed in us.' You are too greedy of enjoyment, my brother, if you wish to rejoice with the world here, and to reign with Christ hereafter.

11 It shall come, it shall come, that day when this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality. Then shall that servant be blessed whom the Lord shall find watching. **Then at the sound of the trumpet**[b] the earth and its peoples shall tremble, but you shall rejoice. The world shall howl at the Lord who comes to judge it, and **the tribes of the earth**[a] shall smite the breast. Once mighty kings **shall tremble in their nakedness**.[a] Venus shall be exposed, and her son too. Jupiter with his fiery bolts will be brought to trial; and Plato, with his disciples, will be but a fool. Aristotle's arguments shall be of no avail. You may seem a poor man and country bred, but then you shall exult, and laugh, and say: Behold my crucified Lord, behold my judge. This is he who was once an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and crying in a manger. This is he whose parents were a workingman and a workingwoman. This is he who, carried into Egypt in his mother's bosom, though he was God, fled before the face of man. This is he who was clothed in a scarlet robe and crowned with thorns. This is he who was called a sorcerer and a man with a devil and a Samaritan. Jew, **behold the hands**[b] which you nailed to the cross. Roman, behold the side which you pierced with the spear. See both of you whether it was this body that the disciples stole secretly and by night. For this you profess to believe.



AD HELIODORVM

C calypſi ciuitas magni regis extruitur. O eremus familiarius deo gaudens. Quid agis frater
in ſæculoſqui maior es mundo? Quãdiu te tectorum umbræ premunt? quamdiu fumoſarum A
urbium carcer indudit? Crede mihi, neſcio quid plus lucis aſpicio. Libet farcina corporis abie
cta, ad purum ætheris euolare fulgorẽ. Paupertatem times? Sed beatos Chriſtus pauperes ap
pellat. Labore terreris? At nemo athleta ſine ſudore coronat. De cibo cogitas? ſed fides famẽ
non timet. Super nudam metuis humũ exeſa ieiunijs membra collidere? ſed dñs tecum iacet.
Squalidi capitis horret inculta cæſaries? ſed caput tuum Chriſtus eſt. Infinita eremi uaſtitas te
terret? ſed tu paradiſum mente deambula. Quotieſcunq; illuc cogitatione conſcenderis toties
in eremo non eris. Scabra ſine balneis attrahitur cutis: ſed qui in Chriſto ſemel lotus eſt: non
illi neceſſe eſt iterũ lauare. Et ut breuiter ad cuncta audias Apoſtolũ reſpondentẽ: Nõ ſunt (in
quit) condignæ paſſiones huius ſæculi ad ſuperuenturam gloriã, quæ reuelabitur in nobis. De
× licatus es frater, ſi & hic uis gaudere cũ ſæculo: & poſtea regnare cũ Chriſto. Veniet ueniet illa
dies, qua corruptiuũ hoc & mortale, incorruptionẽ induat & immortalitatẽ. Beatus ſeruus quẽ
dñs inuenerit uigilantem. Tunc ad uocem tubæ pauebit terra cum populis, & tu gaudebis. Iu
dicaturo dño, lugubre mundus immugiet: tribus ad tribũ pectora feriẽt. Potentiſſimi quon
dam reges, nudo latere palpitabunt. Exhibebitur cum prole ſua Venus. Tunc ignitus Iuppiter
adducetur: & cum ſuis ſtultus Plato diſcipulis. Ariſtotelis argumẽta nõ proderunt. Tunc tu ru
ſticanus & pauper exultabis, & ridebis: & dices: Ecce crucifixus meus: ecce iudex: q obuolutus pã
nis in preſepio uagit. Hic eſt ille operarij & queſtuariæ filius: hic qui matris geſtatus ſinu, ho
minẽ deus fugit in Aegyptũ: hic ueſtitus coccino: hic ſentibus coronatus: hic magus dæmoniũ
habẽs & Samarites. Cerne manus Iudææ quas fixeras: cerne latus Romane quod foderas: Vi
dete corpus an idem ſit: quod dicebaris dam nocte ſuſtuliſſe diſcipulos. Dilectio tua me com
D pulit; ut hæc tibi frater dicerem: ut his tum intereſſe cõtingat, pro quibus nunc labor durus eſt.

ARGVMENTVM ERASMI ROTERODAMI THEOLOGI IN EPISTOLAM
PRAECEDENTEM. B

CVm diuus Hieronymus, Eremũ adiſſet: Heliodorum ſodalem chariſſimum: qui ſe officij
cauſa fuerat profecutus, ut alibi teſtatur, conatus eſt apud ſe retinere: quod cum nõ pol
tuiſſet efficere: litteris ad illũ datis, hortatur ad ſolitariæ uitæ ſocietatẽ. Refellens ſingulæ
quæ eũ uel ab Eremo deterrere: uel in urbibus remorari poſſent. Oſtendens q; q̃ non ſit tu
tũ epiſcopi munus ſuſcipere: & q̃ non facile tueri ſuſceptũ. Deinde uelut in peroratione:
eremiticæ uitæ felicitatẽ decantat: ac ſupremi iudicij terrorem ob oculos ponit. Huius epiſtolæ nomina
tim mentionẽ facit in Catalogo operũ ſuorũ, & exhortatoriam uocat. Scripſit autem admodum adoleſ
cens ac pene puer, quẽadmodũ in proxima teſtatur epiſtola, illud addẽs, ſeſe in hac calentibus adhuc
rhetorũ ſtudijs, p illius ætatis ratiõe, ſcholaſtico flore luſiſſe. Proinde ſcatet metaphoris, allegorijs, etiã
fabuloſis: epiphonematis, dilemmatis, ac reliquis id genus orationis ornamẽtis. Conatur artis eiuſmodi
eſt, ut tyronẽ, ſed ſummæ ſpei tyronẽ poſſis agnoſcere. Cæterum argumenti genus προτρεπτικὸν eſt, de
quo paulo poſt dicemus. SCHOLIA

QVanto amore.) Hic locus uſq; ad illum: Nolo priſtinarum, procemij loco eſt. Comple
ctitur autem & propoſitionẽ & narrationem, admiſcens nonnihil & de affectibus. La
chrymis interlitas.) id eſt, paſſim deletas, a lino, unde & litura, deletio ſcripturæ. Pri
ſtinarum neceſſitudinum.) Quidam codices habebant, neceſſitatum. Vterq; ſenſus quad
drat. Si neceſſitudinũ legis, intellige de affectibus amicorum, quos eſſet relicturus: Si nei
ceſſitatum, de his accipe uitæ cõmodis, quibus carent in Eremo uerſantes. Quãq; & neceſſitudinẽ pro
neceſſitate legimus. Verũ magis placet, ut de affectibus accipiatur. Affatim) ,,abunde. Vallũ & ſof
ſa) Vocabula ſunt militaria. Nam his duabus rebus muniuntur caſtra, uallo, hoc eſt trabibus ac palis cõ
geſtis, & foſſa. Sub pellibus.) Caue dicheris putes de cute hominis aut quidam magni ingenij theo
logus, quem hanc ei cauſa non nominio, uerbo prophetæ Abacuc: Turbabuntur pelles terræ Madian
interpretatus eſt de cute Bartholomæi excoriati. Pelles appellat tentoria, quæ quondã e pellibus confu
ciebantur. Solent milites rigẽte bruma in hyberna ſe recipere, hoc eſt in oppidum aliquod cõmodius.
Duriſſimum autem erat & hyemem ſub pellibus non ſub tectis agere, quod tamen erat aliquoties mi
liti faciundum. Caput operum linteo.) Olim linteorũ uſus & barbaricum habebatur, & parũ uiro
dignũ, ut abunde teſtatur Plinius. Aſſuetum tunicæ.) Tunica delicatior erat ueſtis, & in ocio agen
tium. Sagum erat militaris, & hoc durior lorica. Exaſperat capulus.) Capulus hoc loco ea gladij pars
eſt, qua tenetur. Recordare tyrocinij.) Apte cõmonefacit, olim ſuſcepti ſacramenti. Si quidem fere
fit, ut Chriſtiani, quoniam pueri baptizantur, non admodũ meminerint, quid in baptiſmo iurauerint ni
ſi nouum aliquod uotũ acceſſerit. Cũ non poſſit aliud ſanctius aut religioſius eſſe uotum, q̃ id quod, in

Hieronymi opera 1 (Basel: Froben 1516) f 2 verso,
showing Jerome's text and Erasmus' annotations
Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies,
Victoria University, University of Toronto

My brother, it is affection which has urged me to speak thus; that you who now find the Christian life so hard may have your reward in that day.

Annotations

1 **So conscious**[4] This passage as far as the words 'Do not call to mind' takes the place of an introduction. It comprises the proposition and narration and is not without emotional content.
blotted with tears That is, deleted here and there, from *lino* 'blot out,' from which also *litura* 'blot,' the deletion of writing, is derived
old ties [Erasmus points out a variant reading in the Latin text for 'ties' and states:] Some manuscripts read *necessitatum* 'necessities.' Each sense fits. If you read *necessitudinum*, understand it to refer to the feelings of friends whom he would have abandoned. But if you read *necessitatum*, interpret it to refer to the conveniences of life, which are lacking to those who dwell in the desert. We however read *necessitudo* instead of *necessitas*. Indeed the interpretation that refers to the feelings of friends is preferable.[5]
enough [Erasmus provides a synonym for the Latin word to assist the reader.] That is, abundantly

2 **ramparts and trenches** These are military terms. By these two means camps are fortified by a rampart, that is, by tree trunks and stakes piled together, and by a ditch.
in the field [The Latin is literally 'under skins,' which Erasmus explains as follows:] Do not think that human skin is meant, as a certain very reputable theologian, whom to avoid embarrassment I do not name, interpreted the words of the prophet Habakkuk, 'the curtains of the land of Midian did tremble,'[6] as referring to the skin of the flayed Bartholomew. Jerome calls tents skins, for tents at one time were made of skins. Soldiers are wont in the bitter cold to withdraw into winter quarters, that is, into some more commodious town. It was also a very harsh way of life to spend the winter in tents and not in buildings, which nevertheless soldiers sometimes had to do.
used to a tunic A tunic was rather a luxurious article of clothing and suitable for those at leisure. A cloak was part of a soldier's uniform, and a buckler was even more rugged gear.
a head that has worn a cap [Jerome literally says 'a head covered with linen,' and Erasmus explains:] Once the wearing of linen was even considered barbarian and hardly worthy of a man, as Pliny abundantly testifies.[7]

galled by a sword-hilt In this context the hilt is that part of the sword which is held.

Remember the day He fittingly reminds Heliodorus of the oath that he once took. For, as it generally happens, Christians, since they are baptized in childhood, do not completely remember their baptismal vows unless some new pledge has been added, although there cannot be another vow holier or more religious than that which they have taken in baptism, however many Christians glory in the name. But if a monk fornicates[8] everyone cries out that he has broken his vow. If a layman is lustful, if he prefers money to Christ, no one makes a tragedy out of his failure to fulfil that first and most holy vow by which he bound himself in baptism. And so we believe that in no way has this any significance for us. Scarcely anyone asks what he has promised to Christ in baptism even with solemn oaths, just as if that pledge is some sort of formality, not serious and having no more importance than the oath customarily sworn in the public academies by those making that magnificent profession of the seven liberal arts. Therefore it seems to me that they will best promote Christian life who have taught that the full profession of the baptismal vows be renewed in a solemn ceremony for the young and that the sum and substance of the full gospel message be set forth in clear words but with a loving countenance, as it were, so that God's grace everywhere present and the magnitude of the rewards may prevent them from being discouraged by the difficulties involved.[9]

the day on which you enlisted This is the time in which the still raw recruit (for that is the meaning of *tyro*) is being trained for battle and does not yet possess the martial skills, as do veterans who have taken part in several wars.

buried with Christ in baptism He alludes to a passage in Paul's Epistle to the Romans, chapter 6: 'For we were buried with him by baptism.' Likewise in Colossians, chapter 2: 'Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him.' St Jerome has not simply said 'baptized' but 'buried with Christ in baptism.' This beautifully accords with the point he is making here about the soldier's oath. For indeed we promise not only to die with Christ but also to be buried with him, the very promise we make in baptism when we abjure Satan and his world and his pomps and wickedness.

fealty to him [Jerome uses the term *sacramentum* to mean a soldier's oath, and Erasmus explains:] *Sacramentum* means an oath, or the term can be used whenever we are bound in the course of sacred rites. The latter is also the origin of the term for a military oath. Those released

from it were said to be discharged. A bounty also was given as pledge and pay. Nor was it lawful for a soldier to fight unless bound by the oath, and it was not lawful for the discharged to go into battle. Notice the strong religious element used by the pagans in a profane and ungodly matter when Christians far and wide fight wars without reference to faith or religion. Finally recruits were given a distinctive mark, their names put on a roster, and with a set formula they would swear to fulfil all the commands of their leader and to refuse not even death for the state. Further the form of the oath which was dictated to them is preserved in Vegetius.[10] From this rite of the ancients, then, these ceremonies we Christians use in baptism have been derived.[11] The name of the person to be baptized is asked immediately, the solemn words are spoken, the sign of the cross is imprinted, the devil is abjured as the enemy of Christ.

your little nephew He means Nepotian, as he himself testifies in his eulogy of this man, who was Heliodorus' sister's child.[12]

the only true affection Perhaps instead of *solum* 'only' *solidum* 'real' should be read. And yet 'only' also fits nicely, if it modifies the verb and not the noun, so that you understand that it is a son's duty to have been cruel but in these circumstances only, that is, when parents prevent a child from clinging to Christ. Unless in his usual way he wrote *solum* instead of *praecipuo* 'especially,' as the Latins say *unice amat* 'he loves uncommonly.' Also they call anything outstanding *singulare* 'singular.'[13] Albeit Jerome, I think, distorts this discussion somewhat for his own purpose. For indeed it is appropriate where pagan parents forbid a child from becoming a Christian; but it is not appropriate to desert one's parents who have need perhaps of one's support and hide oneself in the desert or in a monastery when one can live a Christian life with Christians parents, provided that the soul is purged of worldly affections. But such distortion is acceptable in exhortations and prohibitions. But others here and there take this view in earnest: whatever is said of the world is said of life in the world; and they distort this in applying it to the ordinary life of Christians, and what pertains to the following of Christ they ascribe to the monastic life.[14] Once when most of mankind were sacrificing to idols Christians persecuted by these pagans and refusing to endure daily blasphemies against Christ would flee into the desert and rightly avoid the ungodly and destructive world. Now when everywhere Christ is worshipped why should one flee? If you call the world those affections alien to Christ, for example, pride, avarice, envy, lust, this world is within you. You must flee yourself. Otherwise, even in monasteries ever so remote you will find the world.

3 **there shall come** He omits no part of the allegory. He has set forth the travails of the soldier, he has shown their obligation arising from their oath and the bounty, he has shown the danger of failing to fight with courage. Now he also explains the magnitude of the reward.

I am not ignorant He has set forth the attractive features, now he rejects those things that can draw him back, the first of which is the affection of relatives and friends.

not born of flint He alludes to Virgil's poem: 'But rugged Caucasus on his flinty rocks begot thee, / and Hyrcanian tigresses gave thee suck.'[15]

widowed sister This was the mother of Nepotian, whom he mentions elsewhere.

the slaves, your foster-brothers Perhaps *vernulae* or *vernuli* [ie young house-slaves] should be read, for *vernaculus* is an adjective.[16] *Vernae* are slaves that have not been purchased but have been born in one's house. They enjoyed more favour and were considered almost like one's children. We love those more with whom we have grown up.

wait till we die We have restored this passage, which was in more than one way confused and corrupted, from a very old manuscript as follows[17]: '"Only wait till we die and are buried." Perhaps, too, an aged mother, with sunken bosom and furrowed brow, recalling the lullaby with which she once soothed you, adds her entreaties to theirs.' He alludes moreover to a passage in the third satire of Persius: 'Why not rather go on like a pet dove, or like a child in some great man's house that asks to have its food cut up small [*pappare minutum*], or refused in a rage to listen to its mamma's lullaby [*mammae lallare*]?'[18] 'To take pap' is a childish expression; it means the same as 'to eat.' Plautus in *Epidicus* uses the term: 'A new freedman needs something to eat [*quod pappet*].'[19] Whence also baby food is called pap. Likewise to sing a lullaby is, it seems, the expression whereby a nurse entices an infant to take milk. Further the ancients used to call a mother 'mamma,' as they called grandmother 'nanna.' Persius uses these terms in satirizing a spoiled youth because he still needs his mother's blandishments.

recalling Ie making present and restoring to memory

adds her entreaties[20] For it was the custom of nurses to duplicate words, and these words themselves are formed by the duplication of syllables, eg *pappare, lallare*

The learned may call you For it is the work of learned teachers to explicate poets, and it is a half line from Virgil that follows: 'The sole support and pillar of your house.'[21] In this passage certain individuals with little knowledge had written 'grandiloquent' instead of 'learned.'

to whom ... I owe no rites of burial His reference is to that passage in Luke, chapter 9, about the man who when ordered to follow Christ had replied: 'Suffer me first to go and bury my father and mother.' He heard in response: 'Let the dead bury their dead.'[22]

The battering-ram of natural affection The battering-ram in this passage is an instrument of war, which when applied with force shatters walls. Hence also 'to ram' is found instead of 'to strike upon.' Affection [ie *pietas*] must be understood here not as religious devotion but as love of parents, which shakes the mind of one going towards Christ.

If they believe in Christ The dilemma is rhetorical.

4 **On one side self-indulgence presses me hard** You see self-indulgence [*luxuria*] is one thing, lust [*libido*] another.[23] For shortly he adds lust. Self-indulgence or extravagance is the immoderate use of things. Lust has to do with foul pleasures.

lust would fain drive away He alludes to what Paul writes in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, chapter 3: 'Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.' Again in chapter 6 he writes: 'Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you?'

A thousand names He recalls a line of Virgil about the fury Alecto in the seventh book of the *Aeneid*: 'A thousand names are yours, a thousand ways of wounding.'[24]

5 **common harlots**[25] He means prostitutes. Lust moreover is a sort of offering to the devil, just as chastity of body and mind is an offering pleasing to Christ.

members of Christ He alludes to the words of Paul in the Epistle to the Romans, chapter 12: 'I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.'

6 **the receipt of custom** [The word in Jerome's text is *telonaeum*, and Erasmus explains:] *Telos* in Greek means tax or custom. *Telonaeum* or *telonium* denotes a customs-house. *Telones* is a customs collector or publican.

like Charybdis Two hazards of the sea are most celebrated by the poets: Charybdis, which attracted and swallowed up ships, and the rock Scylla, of virginal beauty to those who viewed her from a distance, against which ships were smashed and broken. Virgil describes each of these in the third book of the *Aeneid*, Homer in the twelfth book of the *Odyssey*. Pliny also mentions them in his third book.[26]

like Scylla Some manuscripts have *Scyllaceum*. I myself prefer *Scylleum*.[27] For *Scyllaceum* is an Athenian colony which Virgil describes as 'shipwrecking.'[28] Jerome, however, used *Scylleum* adverbially, that is, 'like Scylla,' and the word *renidens* to mean 'glittering.' So lust lures in order to destroy.

7 **Why not?** The authority was that Christ had not done it. The answer was that no prophet has worth among his own.[29] But astonishing to relate, what a strange reading have some quite shameless men substituted for this passage in Jerome! Namely this: 'Why do you defend this with the highest authority?' Take the answer: Oh, the presumption of the unlettered who hear everything!

8 **Under the old law** For so we read in Deuteronomy, chapter 17: 'And the man that will do presumptuously, and will not hearken unto the priest that standeth to minister there before the Lord thy God, etc.'

not greedy of filthy lucre The Latin word *turpilucros* expresses the Greek compound *αἰσχροκερδεῖς* 'sordidly greedy of gain,' which Paul used to mean 'basely acquisitive.'[30]

purchases to himself a good degree He alludes to the words of Paul in the First Epistle to Timothy, chapter 3: 'For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree.'

9 **Not all bishops** The Greek word for bishop means one who oversees and takes care. Therefore those who live for themselves are falsely named bishops, for they do not oversee.

You notice Stephen To notice [*suspicere*] is to admire, a word which the unlearned commonly corrupt. They change it to *suscipere* [to accept]. Although some in imitation of the Greeks use *suscipere* instead of *approbare* 'to approve,' for which the Greeks say *ἀποδέχεσθαι*.[31] Now Stephen and Nicolas were made deacons at the same time. One was the first to win the crown of martyrdom after Christ, the other was the author of a heresy. You will read of both in the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 6.

the heresy of the neophytes Some manuscripts have the reading 'of the Nicolaitans.'[32] These heretics are mentioned in the decretals, causa 24, quaestio 3.[33] Their error was that wives should be held in common. Augustine discusses them more fully in his book *De haeresibus ad Quodvultdeum*.[34] They are mentioned in the Apocalypse, chapter 2: 'But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.'

Amos was stripping mulberry bushes The passage to which he alludes is the book of that very prophet, chapter 7: 'I am no prophet, neither am I a prophet's son; but I am a herdsman, and a gatherer of

sycamore fruit.' But Jerome in a preface in which he covers the contents of all the canonical books of Scripture writes as follows: 'Amos, a shepherd and a peasant and a man stripping mulberry bushes, cannot be explained in a few words.'[35] He writes the same in this passage on the prophet. Further, the words 'a gatherer of sycamore fruit' refer, I think, to mulberry bushes, which bear mulberries and are a solace to the hunger and poverty of shepherds. The Hebrew word here is variously translated. Aquila and Symmachus have 'sycamore fruit,' Theodotion has 'mulberry bushes.'[36] One person thinks it is the sycamine tree that grows in the Palestinian marshes and bears wild figs, which, if they were not plucked, would make the reed grass very bitter and would be spoiled by midges. Therefore Jerome is not greatly troubled whether we read 'sycamore fruit' or 'mulberry bushes,' except that he gives more support to the latter reading by denying that any such tree grows in that wilderness where Amos lived.

to rend the veil He means that a bishopric should be taken away from the unworthy. One allusion is to the rending of the veil at the moment of the Lord's death, for that signified the abrogation of the priesthood of the old law; the other is to a passage in the Apocalypse.[37]

10 **my epilogue** He calls his argumentation rocks and craggy places that are perilous for sailors, for arguments present difficulty rather than delight. An epilogue is a kind of conclusion wherein those things that were expressed in some detail are summarily repeated.

the joyful shout of mariners The term [the word in Jerome's text is *celeuma*] refers to the cry of sailors exhorting one another. By it they show their eagerness as they enter port. The Greek word κελεύω means 'to command,' and the trireme's master is called κελευστής 'a commander.'

in the Apocalypse This mystical city is described in the Apocalypse, chapter 21.

11 **the tribes of the earth** This is a tacit allusion to a passage in Isaiah, chapter 16: 'Therefore shall Moab howl for Moab, everyone shall howl.' That is, people for people.[38]

shall tremble in their nakedness For here, surrounded and begirt by attendants, they fear no one; there, abandoned by those standing by on their flanks, they shall tremble, for a bodyguard or attendant is said to close the flank.

Rhetorical commentary[39]

Since St Jerome in the next letter confesses that in this one he played with a flowery rhetoric, perhaps it will not be amiss also to set forth the rhetorical

principles he followed, but I will do this briefly and without too much concern for detail to prevent two disadvantages from dogging us at the same time: wearying the reader, and depriving the salutary precepts of that illustrious man of their weight and their credibility. For minds usually are moved less by writings that are thought to derive from a conscious artistry than from inspiration. And first to say something about the kind of subject, it belongs to the hortatory genre, as has been said above. This is so close to the persuasive kind of discourse that Aristotle did not think that there was any distinction between the two.[40] In my judgment, however, there is some difference. For the aim of persuasion is to influence the will; the aim of exhortation is to encourage and enable. Persuasion is directed at the irresolute, exhortation at the inactive. We persuade when we show what it is advantageous to do, we exhort when we add emotion to our discourse. When a general is about to join battle with the enemy he does not exhort his troops to make them understand that the battle is necessary, but he applies the spur to give them the courage and the strength to execute the battle plan. Nevertheless the elements of each genre pretty much coincide, that is, the good, the expedient, the praiseworthy, the possible, the necessary, the facile, the pleasurable, and other comparable notions. From all of these arguments are sought. Exhortation has this special feature: it is more fiery and has a large admixture of the laudatory, which however Jerome does not use in this letter. For men are incited above all by two factors, praise and the fear of disgrace. Writings of this kind are nothing else than Christian declamations. For when Christians saw that eloquence was something at the same time most beautiful and most useful and did not think it fitting to be occupied as the profane rhetoricians were with trifling subjects, such as whether a channel should be cut though the isthmus, or whether Alexander should set out on the ocean and sail afar, like Socrates in philosophy they made the whole theory of declamation subservient to moral instruction. Also, to lend greater seriousness to what they were doing they changed the name from declamation to essays [*libelli*] or letters. The result was that by the same stroke they gained two useful ends: while they were practising eloquence, which very quickly becomes dry, as Cicero says,[41] they were also exhorting to piety by their salutary admonitions.

1 **So conscious**[42] An exordium is not used in this genre as is customary in forensic oratory, and there is no need for a narration, as Quintilian also declares.[43] Yet every subject must have some beginning. Jerome almost always joins the proposition, which contains a summary of his subject-matter, to some kind of narration. For when he tells how Heliodorus had accompanied him on his journey into the desert and

how in vain he had asked him to remain with him there is a narration, so to speak. Then when he says that it was the object of his letter to have Heliodorus leave the cities and come to the desert there is the proposition. And yet St Jerome does not give us a lifeless account of these details, but he is always on fire, a man, it appears, of a vigorous disposition and vehement in both praise and blame. For he ardently praises those he loves, and he vigorously attacks those who have aroused his hostility. It is marvellous to see with what rhythms he composes his entire discourse, with what periods he completes every thought. Thus the whole has been constructed with its parts and clauses in equal balance. The passage 'So conscious are you' up to 'With the pretty ways' consists of twin periods completed in six parts. Again, a third period is added to these two, which has two parts and four clauses. But since this pattern constantly recurs I do not intend to say more.

Was I to hold my peace? He neatly mixes uncertainty with his reply. At the same time, however, this is also a dilemma. There is a single thought in each part appropriate to the person addressed but also susceptible of general application. No one can conceal his burning desire. And he does not hear who does not love. Also the love of an absent friend is tormented by grief for his absence.

I invite you now; come, and come quickly This is the proposition, in which he sets forth the gist of his theme.

Do not call to mind old ties This is the beginning, the threshold as it were, of the argumentation. He does here what is usually done in the second part of the forensic division.[44] For first he refutes those considerations which seemingly can deter Heliodorus from a life in the desert: the affection of friends and parents, the hardships of distant travels, the love and advantages of wealth. Further he expresses himself here in the form of an enthymeme.[45]

He is rich enough And he concludes this part with an exclamation,[46] as generally he is pleased to conclude every part, not only exordiums but also transitions, narrations, argumentations, and whatever else has some unity and completeness. Moreover he enhances the character of this exclamation by the addition of contraries, that is, words of opposite meanings, such as rich and poor.[47]

2 **But what is this** Appropriately by repeating what he had said above[48] he begins the first part of the argumentation, namely the part concerning the affection of friends. He also adds an aphorism: 'Offended love does well to be angry.' Nearly everything St Jerome has to say, however, has an aphoristic quality. Quintilian observes that in

declamation some people are on fire from the very beginning and thus reproach the person they are trying to persuade as if he disagreed with them.[49]

Offended love does well to be angry He also uses this aphorism as a transition, a practice Quintilian mentions.[50] In declamation some writers have found aphorisms so pleasing that they never fail to weave them in.

effeminate soldier The more subtle the contraries the happier, for nothing less befits a soldier than to be effeminate and to be weakened by soft living.

What keeps you in your father's house? Such rhetorical figures as questions, repetitions, and short clauses make the discourse more impassioned. Metaphor or rather allegory elevates it to an even loftier and more pleasing level. Indeed he uses a well-nigh continuous metaphor. It is almost the constant practice of Jerome, however, to place at the beginning passages that are especially attractive and delightful by which to entice the reader through pleasure and induce him to read on more eagerly. For no one is inattentive to what gives him delight. Several times he accomplishes this by a digression, called an *ecbasis* in Greek. Many put this immediately after the proposition, as Quintilian also attests.[51] But this *ecbasis* fits in so well with the subject itself that it is part of the argumentation, but a part that affords greater delight. He argues here moreover from the standpoint of what is right, or if you prefer from the standpoint of necessity. But it is still a matter of what is right, and he who has once sworn an oath of fealty to his leader cannot but follow him.

from your chamber to the battlefield Contrasting words that have been skilfully brought together, such as chamber and battlefield, shade and sun, greatly enhance the style. And the repetition of 'from' as well as the absence of conjunctions [*asyndeta*] give it no little pungency. What is more there are contrasts in the words that follow – tunic and buckler, cap and helmet, tender and galled. Yet these latter words also contain an implied enthymeme. Nor should we overlook that there is some emphasis in the juxtaposition of these words and their arrangement. Note too the use of the pronoun 'you,' which those who know Latin do not express except to distinguish or to give emphasis. Also note the pronoun *mihi*, which in this passage means nothing [syntactically] but has been added to give humour, or rather it conveys displeasure.[52] Finally, the interjection 'lo' is not superfluous; it presents the picture to us as somewhat absurd. And when Jerome just above says 'to mow down all that encounters it' how much pleasure as

well as power has he added to his discourse by virtue of the metaphor of a single word.

Hear the proclamation He still continues with the military metaphor. Proclamations are made by commanders. Christ is the leader of this army, the Christian is a soldier. Baptism is the recruit's induction. The profession of a Christian life is the soldier's oath. The grace conferred in baptism is the soldier's bounty. The world or the devil is the enemy. It should be noted how he uses military terms anywhere he alludes to military service.

Lo, the enemy He expresses two reasons for fighting: first, to defend the commander, Christ, whom the foe is attempting to kill; second, to prevent the bounty from falling into the hands of the enemy. For this also is wont to rouse the spirits of soldiers to fight with zeal. Therefore Vegetius advises that the personal possessions of soldiers be kept with their standard so that they will follow it more eagerly.[53]

Should your little nephew hang on your neck All of these things are part of the military metaphor. For they usually happen when a soldier is about to set out for war and leaves his family behind. Granted that Jerome later writes that he had used prophetic words concerning Nepotian,[54] nevertheless he is not speaking in earnest here as if the event had occurred, but he depicts in vivid terms [*hypotyposis*] what usually happens on such an occasion. What painter could have rendered the scene more vividly than [Jerome does] here, the young nephew hanging on his neck, the father prostrate on the threshold to prevent his son from going out without trampling him under foot, the mother, hair loosened, garments torn, showing her breasts and imploring him by the nourishment they once provided. Present too are those pleasing dispositions which the Greeks and Latins call moral traits. Therefore a discourse or poem in which these are accurately expressed is said to have its characters properly drawn, to use Horace's phrase.[55]

to the standard of the cross If he had not added 'of the cross' it would have been allegorical. For military banners are called standards. It is however the most excellent kind of metaphor that joins words used literally with those used metaphorically, as Quintilian also points out.[56]

the only true affection This is an implicit argument derived from definition.[57] For the meaning of the word is changed, and at the same time it is in an exclamation, not without the charm of contrasting words, on which note this part ends.

3 **there shall come – yes, there shall come** Again by duplication and

repetition he lends greater feeling to his expression. As the earlier part draws its arguments from the notion of what is honourable, so this part draws its arguments from the notion of what is expedient. For Quintilian also puts the praiseworthy and the pleasurable under the latter heading.[58] Jerome shows what glory, what advantages attend the victor. For it is glorious to return to one's fatherland after victory, it is magnificent to go in triumphal procession, it is extraordinary to gain the right of Roman citizenship for oneself and one's family. For this reward also was once bestowed.

will walk [Jerome's Latin is *incedas*, and Erasmus comments:] It is the appropriate word for one who advances in a solemn procession.

the heavenly Jerusalem Here he explains the metaphor by adding 'heavenly.'

the crown He alludes to crowns: civic, mural, and siege.[59]

I am not ignorant Up to this point he has handled the pleasant subject of a metaphor from the military. Now he attacks his theme in a serious vein, namely, overcoming the feelings of parents and relatives. And this passage, like an entrance court to the argumentation that follows, is made attractive by the use of allusion and vivid description. The allusions are to 'the Hyrcanian tigresses' and 'the sole support and pillar of your house' and to 'the mamma's lullaby.'[60] The vivid description is employed when he does not relate the complete story but puts it before our eyes as a painting.[61] Nevertheless he does not retreat entirely from the military metaphor. Indeed when he mentions the soldier's oath he shows what the reward will be and he reveals how the battle must be fought.

Now it is a widowed sister etc This passage not only has a vivid description of the persons, which puts the scene before our eyes, but the speech of each one is also added with marvellous propriety. To the sister he does not assign speech but because of its appropriateness a gesture. He portrays the house-slaves as anxious over a change of master. The nurse and the body-servant, the two old people, plead in the name of their death, which is near at hand. The aged mother reminds him of the nursing she had once provided. The teachers offer something from the poet whom they once had lectured upon. Moral traits as well as epithets contribute to the emotional content.[62] A sister stirs the emotions, but a widowed sister more; a nurse stirs the emotions, but an old nurse more; a mother stirs the emotions, but a mother now old and decrepit more.

easily break He has appended this sentence as an exclamation, for he completes every part of his discourse with conclusions of this kind.

Scripture, you will argue This is a refutation, and the objection has been drawn from the notion of what is right.[63]

but whoso He is touching on questions of quality involving a comparison, for these also occur in persuasive discourse.[64] Obedience is owed to parents, but more so to Christ. A mother's tears are moving, but danger to life has greater impact. Jerome handles this moreover in the manner of Cicero, mustering his forces for the most part by means of questions to intensify the feeling. This to prevent his argumentation from becoming like that of our own theologians,[65] than whom no ice can be colder. It should be noticed that in the comparison one term is weakened and the other strengthened. One is weakened when he says a mother's tears not a father's, for women in their weakness, especially mothers, are given to tears about anything, and again when he says 'shall I think,' meaning that there is no time at all for thinking. The other is strengthened when he says 'the enemy takes sword in hand to slay me,' making the present danger worse by the use of frightening words and placing the scene, as it were, before our eyes. It is moreover a comparison that also serves to prove his point, to say nothing of the clarity and pleasure it affords.[66] One can explain it as follows: just as the soldier in that hour of danger ignores his mother's tears, so the Christian does not regard the feelings of his parents when it is a matter of his eternal life.

for the sake of a father An argument is developed here *a minori* by means of a comparison. If one may leave a father unburied when he must go to Christ, with much greater cause may he leave a living one. There is moreover the happy use of language in the figure of word repetition, which some call *traductio*,[67] that is, 'Christ's servant,' as well as 'I owe.' There is also a double enthymeme flung out with remarkable pungency.

the Lord on the eve of his passion He corroborates his reasons by examples, which sometimes are also treated by means of comparison. But that could not be done appropriately in this passage.

The battering-ram Notice how he harks back to the combat. And again he closes the argument with an exclamation, but not without the help of a figure of speech joining the metaphorical with the literal.

My mother He takes this argument from definition, and he combines definition with authority.

If they believe in Christ He has employed a most elegant dilemma. Either they believe, or they do not believe; if they believe, they will be favourable, they will not stand in the way; if they do not believe, I owe them nothing. But in the first part of the dilemma there is an argument from consequences, in the second part from definition.

4 **But all this, you argue, only touches the case of martyrs** Again he poses an objection to refute, but not without using a figure, that is, by having his opponent speak, just as he does a little earlier. Moreover Scripture's teaching refutes the objection.

my brother, you are mistaken He adds to the argument a strong assertion, which sometimes has the weight of an argument. The argument itself he draws from definition while showing that the entire life of a Christian is a martyrdom.

5 **My dear brother** He strengthens the definition by the use of comparison and authority.

Idolatry is not confined He refutes the definition of opponents and strengthens his own.

Covetousness He admirably imparts conviction to his argument when he exposes what he is refuting as most absurd. He handles his argument from consequences or effects.

the Lord says He couples examples with authority, the last of which he handles with a comparison to lend greater force: 'The Son of man hath not where to lay his head.'[68]

6 **If you look to inherit** He adds this as an exclamation of his argument. To this he joins proof from contraries.[69]

has the name no meaning Quintilian says that suitable arguments are not drawn from a name.[70] They do have value, however, in exhortations; for example, if someone in exhorting Pope Julius to undertake war against the French should say to him: 'Thou art Julius, thou must act the part of Julius.' But in this passage Jerome employs a kind of definition that is called etymology.[71] A monk is so called from his solitary life; a person who lives in a crowd therefore is not a monk.

The advice that I give This passage imitates Cicero's oration *Pro Murena*.[72] He develops the passage from the consequences, and he carefully adorns it throughout with allegory and metaphor.

The calm that you speak of is itself a tempest With an exclamation he again closes his argumentation, elegantly crafted with contrasting words.

Why so? Again he handles this argument with a reply to his own rhetorical question.[73]

7 **But where there is no honour** He lends embellishment and grace to the inductive argument from his climactic order, as this kind of elaboration is called.[74] Yet a great part of this argumentation, to be frank, smacks of the age in which Jerome wrote this letter.

8 **The clergy feed Christ's sheep** There is a contrast here involving a comparison between different things.

10 **At last my discourse is clear of the reefs** As he does everywhere he takes into account the sensitivity of the reader. He had given him refreshment before he began his argumentation, which although expedient and necessary nevertheless affords less pleasure. Now again in the peroration he refreshes, as it were, one fatigued. But the transition here, it seems to me, lacks polish and is too abrupt. For it is Quintilian's teaching that every time a transition is needed to another theme we take care to link up in some way the last part of what we have said with what we are about to say.[75] But Jerome also has other transitions that are somewhat awkward. Further, although previously he has drawn his arguments from what is right, from what is praiseworthy, and especially from what is prudent, in the peroration he argues from what is pleasurable, comparing the pleasures of the desert with the disadvantages of the town.

Do you dread poverty? This is truly the conclusion of the argumentation, for the parts that precede and follow have to do with emotions that above all are customarily treated in the peroration.[76]

11 **Then at the sound of the trumpet** Here he arouses those emotions which are called *pathe*, namely the more violent ones, heightening a terrifying event with terrifying words.[77]

behold the hands An apostrophe also makes for strong emotions, just as Quintilian declares.[78] He employs this now after all the emotions have been stirred up.

An antidote against misrepresentation

St Jerome when he was alive did not want for slanderous misrepresentation. His own letters declare this, letters in which on occasion he is forced to reply to his dogs, as he calls them.[79] In fact at the present time I have found that there are some, especially among the Italians, who are not very fair to that incomparable man. It is amazing how they accept – not to say how they treasure dearly – that incredibly foolish story circulated under the name of Theodorus Gaza who said that Jerome had been falsely accused of being a Ciceronian.[80] These people, it seems to me, view Jerome with hostility for no other reason than that his letters savour more of Christ and breathe a greater holiness than they would have wished. After the example of Neoptolemus, they approve of his being a Christian but do not approve of his being too much of a Christian.[81] I have discussed this matter in its proper place. Further, I realize that there are men whose nature drives them only to search out something that in some way they can misrepresent, whereas the little bee flitting to every flower, to every bush, selects only what can produce

honey.[82] Those who have grown old in thorny disputations and in what I might call a brawling theology especially labour at this mischief. They have the habit of picking four or five words out of an entire book and of putting on display the great power of their intellects in misinterpreting them. They pay no attention to the times in which Jerome has written, to the person addressed, to the occasion, or to the spirit of his composition. Nor do they discuss what preceded it or what follows it or what he wrote on the same subject in another place. Those four words alone are their exigent and pressing concern, and they apply all their syllogistic tricks to them. They distort, they pervert, and several times they even misrepresent what they have not understood. Consequently there is nothing strange, as far as I can see, if to my annotations I add an antidote to forearm the reader and enable him to engage in the study of this truly saintly man without any harm. It is not because there is any suspicion in his writings of anything poisonous – his works, all of them without exception, have the approval of ecclesiastical authority – but the antidote I have prepared is against the poison of misrepresentation. Therefore in this letter, which he played with as a youth rather than wrote, according to his testimony, we must not conclude that he is literally demanding whatever he wrote with excessive vehemence to bolster his exhortation, as for instance when he seems to demand poverty of every Christian. His words are: 'Consider well, my brother; nothing is yours to keep. "Whosoever he be of you," the Lord says, "that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."' For Jerome does not, I believe, make this demand of Heliodorus as a monk when he does not make it of the monk Rusticus.[83] And his opinion of every Christian is revealed by what follows: 'Why are you such a half-hearted Christian?'[84] Therefore we must acknowledge, I think, that Jerome in exhorting has overstated his case and has used hyperbole, just as Paul in writing to the Hebrews to deter those who had made a profession of faith in Christ from repeating their sins says that it is impossible for those who had once been enlightened to be 'renewed unto repentance' if they have fallen back into sin, although the church daily reinstates lapsed Christians.[85] Thus we sometimes overshoot the mark in our determination to hit the mark, especially when no laws or decretals are cited, but when, with due consideration given to the occasion and the person, exhortation, consolation, or admonition is the mode of expression. Or at least it must be understood in this way: 'You may not have possessions,' as long as you supply the proviso 'if you would be perfect.' And yet the evangelical precept speaks of giving up not so much land and money as emotional attachments. That man very clearly has renounced wealth who neither strives to accumulate it, nor grieves to lose it, nor rejoices in its abundance, nor considers it of any value. Finally he it is who,

in the words of Paul, possesses as if he does not possess.[86] Otherwise what are we to say of so many distinguished bishops who in their wealth can vie even with kings? What of the other very rich Christians every one of whom rejoices in being called a disciple of Christ? For what else is being a disciple of Christ than being a Christian?

LETTER 2

JEROME TO NEPOTIAN ON THE LIFE OF CLERICS AND PRIESTS

This is the second letter in Erasmus' edition (HO I 5–9 verso, with Erasmus' summary, annotations, antidote, and postscripts). The letter is Ep 52 in PL, Fremantle, and Hilberg. Jerome addresses it to the nephew of his friend Heliodorus, who was then Bishop of Altinum. Nepotian had once been a soldier and was now a priest.

A summary of the following letter

He prescribes for Nepotian, who was the son of Heliodorus' sister, the way of life that clerics and bishops ought to follow, recommending certain very wholesome precepts concerning the disdain of riches and the avoidance of intimate association with worldly persons and especially with women. He treats the teaching of piety, restraint in dress, buildings, and table, avoidance of both the praises and the detraction of men, the pledge of silence, the refusal of gifts, and the dispensing of alms to the poor. The letter belongs to the class which gives moral exhortation, a class in which St Jerome is marvellously effective, as he is elsewhere as well. There are many citations from this letter in a great many places in the decretals of the popes.[1]

Text of Jerome's letter

1 **Again and again you ask me**, my dear Nepotian, in your letters from over the sea, to draw for you a few rules of life, showing how one who has renounced the service of the world to become a monk or a clergyman may keep the straight path of Christ, and not be drawn aside into the haunts of vice. **As a young man**, or rather as a boy, and while I was curbing by the hard life of the desert the first onslaughts of youthful passion, I sent a letter of remonstrance to your reverend uncle, Heliodorus, which, by the tears and complainings with which it was filled, showed him the feelings of the friend whom he had deserted. In it I acted the part suited to my age, and as I was still aglow **with the methods and maxims of the rhetoricians**, I decked it out a good deal with the flourishes of the schools. Now, however, my head is grey, my brow is furrowed, **a dewlap like that of an ox hangs from my chin**, and, as Virgil says, '**The chilly blood** stands still around my heart.' Elsewhere he sings: '**Old age bears all,**

even the mind, away.' And a little further on: 'So many of my songs **are gone from me**, / And even my very voice has left me now.'

2 But that I may not seem to quote only profane literature, listen to the mystical teaching of the sacred writings. Once **David had been a man of war, but at seventy** age had chilled him so that nothing would make him warm. A girl is accordingly sought from the coasts of Israel – Abishag the Shunamite – to sleep with the king and warm his aged frame. Does it not seem to you – if you keep to the letter that killeth – like some **farcical story** or some broad jest from **an Atellan play**? A chilly old man is wrapped up in blankets, and only grows warm in a girl's embrace. **Bathsheba was still living**, Abigail was still left, and the remainder of those wives and concubines whose names the Scripture mentions. Yet they are all rejected as cold, and only in the one young girl's embrace does the old man become warm. Abraham was far older than David; still, so long as Sarah lived he sought no other wife. Isaac counted twice the years of David, yet never felt cold with Rebekah, old though she was. **I say nothing of the antediluvians**, who, although after nine hundred years their limbs must have been not old merely, but decayed with age, had no recourse to girls' embraces. Moses, the leader of the Israelites, counted one hundred and twenty years, yet sought no change from Zipporah.

3 Who, then, is this Shunamite, this wife and maid, so glowing as to warm the cold, yet so holy as not to arouse passion in him whom she warmed? Let Solomon, wisest of men, tell us of his father's favourite; let **the man of peace recount to us the embraces of the man of war**. 'Get wisdom,' he writes, 'get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth. Forsake her not and she shall preserve thee: love her and she shall keep thee. Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get wisdom, and with all thy getting get understanding. Exalt her and she shall promote thee. She shall bring thee to honour when thou dost embrace her. She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace: a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee.'

Almost all bodily excellences alter with age, and while wisdom alone increases all things else decay. Fasts and vigils and **almsdeeds** become harder. So also do **sleeping on the ground**, moving from place to place, hospitality to travellers, pleading for the poor, earnestness and steadfastness in prayer, the visitation of the sick, manual labour to supply money for almsgiving. All acts, in short, of which the body is the medium decrease with its decay.

Now, there are young men still full of life and vigour who, by toil and burning zeal, as well as by holiness of life and constant prayer to the Lord Jesus, have obtained knowledge. I do not speak of these, or say that in them the love of wisdom is cold, for this withers in many of the old by reason of age. What I mean is that youth, as such, has to cope with the assaults of passion, and amid the allurements of vice and the tinglings of the flesh is stifled like a fire among green boughs, and cannot

develop its proper brightness. But when men have employed their youth in commendable pursuits and have meditated on the law of the Lord day and night, they learn with the lapse of time, fresh experience and wisdom come as the years go by, and so from the pursuits of the past their old age reaps a harvest of delight. Hence that wise man of Greece, Themistocles, perceiving, after the expiration of one hundred and seven years, that he was on the verge of the grave, is reported to have said that he regretted extremely having to leave life just when he was beginning to grow wise. **Plato died in his eighty-first year**, his pen still in his hand. **Isocrates** completed ninety years and nine in the midst of literary and scholastic work. I say nothing of other philosophers, such as **Pythagoras, Democritus, Xenocrates, Zeno**, and **Cleanthes**, who in extreme old age displayed the vigour of youth in the pursuit of wisdom. I pass on to the poets, **Homer, Hesiod, Simonides, Stesichorus**, who all lived to a great age, yet at the approach of death sang each of them **a swan song** sweeter than their wont. **Sophocles**, when charged by his sons with dotage on account of his advanced years and his neglect of his property, read out to his judges his recently composed play of Oedipus, and made so great a display of wisdom – in spite of the inroads of time – that he changed the decorous silence of the law court into the applause of the theatre. And no wonder, when **Cato the Censor**, that most eloquent of Romans, in his old age neither blushed at the thought of learning Greek nor despaired of succeeding. Homer, for his part, relates that **from the tongue of Nestor**, even when quite aged and helpless, there flowed speech sweeter than honey.

Even the very name Abishag in its mystic meaning points to the greater wisdom of old men. For the translation of it is 'My father is over and above' or 'my father's roaring.' **The term 'over and above'** is obscure, but in this passage is indicative of excellence, and implies that the old have a larger stock of wisdom and that it even overflows by reason of its abundance. In another passage 'over and above' forms an antithesis to 'necessary.' Moreover, Abishag, that is, 'roaring,' is properly used of the sound which the waves make, and of the murmur which we hear coming from the sea. From which it is plain that the thunder of the divine voice dwells in old men's ears with a volume of sound beyond the voices of men. Again, in our tongue Shunamite means 'scarlet,' a hint that the love of wisdom becomes warm and glowing through religious study. For though the colour may point to the mystery of the Lord's blood, it also sets forth the warm glow of wisdom. Hence it is a scarlet thread that in Genesis the midwife binds upon the hand of Pharez – Pharez 'the divider,' so called because he divided the partition which had separated two peoples. So, too, with a mystic reference to the shedding of blood, it was a scarlet cord which the harlot Rahab (a type of the church) hung in her window to preserve her house in the destruction of Jericho. Hence, in another place Scripture says of holy men: **'These are they which came** from the warmth of the house of the father of

Rechab.' And in the gospel the Lord says: 'I am come to cast fire upon the earth, **and fain am I to see it kindled**.' This was the fire which, when it was kindled in the disciples' hearts, constrained them to say: 'Did not our heart burn within us while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?'

4 To what end, you ask, these recondite references? To show that you need not expect from me boyish declamation, flowery sentiments, a meretricious style, and **at the close of every paragraph** the terse and pointed aphorisms which call forth approving shouts from those who hear them. Let Wisdom alone embrace me; let her nestle in my bosom, my Abishag who grows not old. Undefiled truly is she, and a virgin forever; for although she daily conceives and unceasingly brings to the birth, like Mary she remains undeflowered. When the Apostle says 'be fervent in spirit,' he means 'be true to wisdom.' And when our Lord in the gospel declares that in the end of the world – when the shepherd shall grow foolish, according to the prophecy of Zechariah – 'the love of many shall wax cold,' he means that wisdom shall decay. Hear, therefore – to quote the sainted Cyprian – 'words forcible rather than elegant.' Hear one who, though he is your brother in orders, is in years your father; who can conduct you from the cradle of faith to spiritual manhood; and who, while he builds up stage by stage the rules of holy living, can instruct others in instructing you. I know, of course, that from your reverend uncle, Heliodorus, now a bishop of Christ, you have learned and are daily learning all that is holy; and that in him you have before you a rule of life and a pattern of virtue. Take, then, my suggestions for what they are worth, and compare my precepts with his. He will teach you the perfection of a monk, and I shall show you the whole duty of a clergyman.

5 A clergyman, then, as he serves Christ's church, must first understand what his name means: and then, when he realizes this, must endeavour to be that which he is called. For since the Greek word κλῆρος means 'lot' or 'inheritance,' the clergy are so called either because they are the lot of the Lord, or else because the Lord himself is their lot and portion. Now, he who in his own person is the Lord's portion, must so bear himself as to possess the Lord and to be possessed by him. He who possesses the Lord and who says with the prophet 'The Lord is my portion' can hold to nothing besides the Lord. For if he hold to something besides the Lord, the Lord will not be his portion. Suppose, for instance, that he holds to gold or silver or possessions or inlaid furniture; with such portions as these the Lord will not deign to be his portion. I, if I am the portion of the Lord, and the line of his heritage, receive no portion among the remaining tribes; but, like the priest and the Levite, I live on the tithe, and serving the altar, am supported by its offerings. Having food and raiment, I shall be content with these, and as a disciple of the cross shall share its poverty. I beseech you, therefore, and 'again and yet again admonish you'; do not look to your military experience for a standard of clerical obligation. Under Christ's banner seek for no worldly gain, lest having more than when you first became a clergyman, you hear

men say, to your shame, '**Their portion shall not profit them.**' Welcome poor men and strangers to your homely board, that with them Christ may be your guest. A clergyman who engages in business, and who rises from poverty to wealth and from obscurity to a high position, avoid as you would the plague. For 'evil communications corrupt good manners.' You despise gold; he loves it. You spurn wealth; he eagerly pursues it. You love silence, meekness, privacy; he takes delight in talking and effrontery, in squares, and streets, **and apothecaries' shops**. What unity of feeling can there be where there is so wide a divergency of manners?

A woman's foot should seldom, if ever, cross the threshold of your home. To all who are Christ's virgins show the same regard or the same disregard. Do not linger under the same roof with them, and do not rely on your past continence. You cannot be holier than David or wiser than Solomon. Always bear in mind that it was a woman who expelled the tiller of paradise from his heritage. In case you are sick one of the brethren may attend you; your sister also or your mother or some woman whose faith is approved with all. But if you have no persons so connected with you or so marked out by chaste behaviour, the church maintains many elderly women who by their ministrations may oblige you and benefit themselves so that even your sickness may bear fruit in the shape of almsdeeds. I know of cases where the recovery of the body has but precluded the sickness of the soul. There is danger for you in the service of one for whose face you constantly watch. If in the course of your clerical duty you have to visit a widow or a virgin, never enter the house alone. Let your companions be persons association with whom will not disgrace you. If you take a reader with you or **an acolyte or a psalm-singer**, let their character not their garb be their adornment; let them use no **tongs** to curl their hair; rather let their mien be an index of their chastity. You must not sit alone with a woman or see one without witnesses. If she has anything confidential to disclose, she is sure to have some nurse or housekeeper, some virgin, some widow, some married woman. She cannot be so friendless as to have none save you to whom she can venture to confide her secret. Beware of all that gives occasion for suspicion; and, to avoid scandal, shun every act that may give colour to it. Frequent gifts of handkerchiefs and garters, of face-cloths and dishes first tasted by the giver – to say nothing of notes full of fond expressions – of such things as these a holy love knows nothing. Such endearing and alluring expressions as 'my honey' and 'my darling,' 'you who are all my charm and my delight,' the ridiculous courtesies of lovers and their foolish doings, we blush for on the stage and abhor in men of the world. How much more do we loathe them in monks and clergymen who adorn the priesthood by their vows while their vows are adorned by the priesthood. I speak thus not because I dread such evils for you or for men of saintly life, but because in all ranks and callings and among both men and women there are found both good and bad, and in condemning the bad I commend the good.

6 Shameful to say, idol-priests, play-actors, jockeys, and prostitutes can inherit property: clergymen and monks alone lie under a legal disability, a disability enacted not by persecutors but **by Christian emperors**. I do not complain of the law, but I grieve that we have deserved a statute so harsh. **Cauterizing** is a good thing, no doubt; but how is it that I have a wound which makes me need it? The law is so strict and far-seeing, yet even so rapacity goes on unchecked. By **a fiction of trusteeship** we set the statute at defiance; and, as if **imperial decrees** outweigh the mandates of Christ, we fear the laws and despise the Gospels. If heir there must be, the mother has first claim upon her children, the church upon her flock – the members of which she has borne and reared and nourished. Why do we thrust ourselves in between mother and children?

It is the glory of a bishop to make provision for the wants of the poor; but it is the shame of all priests to amass private fortunes. I who was born (suppose) in a poor man's house, in a country cottage, and who could scarcely get of common **millet** and **household bread** enough to fill an empty stomach, am now come to disdain **the finest wheat flour and honey**. I know the several kinds of fish by name. I can tell unerringly **on what coast a mussel** has been picked. I can distinguish by the flavour the province from which a bird comes. Dainty dishes delight me because their ingredients are scarce and I end by finding pleasure in their **ruinous cost**.

I hear also of servile attention shown by some towards old men and women when these are childless. They fetch **the basin**, haunt the bed and perform with their own hands the most revolting offices. They anxiously await the advent of the doctor and with trembling lips they ask whether the patient is better. If for a little while the old fellow shows signs of returning vigour, they are in agonies. They pretend to be delighted, but their covetous hearts undergo secret torture. For they are afraid that their labours may go for nothing and compare an old man with a clinging to life to the patriarch **Methuselah**. How great a reward might they have with God if their hearts were not set on a temporal prize. With what great exertions do they pursue an empty heritage! Less labour might have purchased for them the pearl of Christ.

7 Read the divine Scriptures constantly; never, indeed, let the sacred volume be out of your hand. Learn what you have to teach. '**Hold fast** the faithful word as you have been taught, that you may be able by sound doctrine to exhort and convince the gainsayers. **Continue thou** in the things that thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and **be ready always** to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope and faith that are in you.' Do not let your deeds belie your words; lest when you speak in church someone may mentally reply 'Why do you not practise what you profess? Here is a lover of dainties turned censor! his stomach is full and he reads us a homily on fasting. As well might a robber accuse others of covetousness.' In a priest of Christ, mouth, mind, and hand should be at one.

Be obedient to your bishop and welcome him as the parent of your soul. Sons

love their fathers and slaves fear their masters. '**If I be a father**,' he says, 'where is mine honour? And if I am a master where is my fear?' In your case the bishop combines in himself many titles to your respect. He is at once a monk, a prelate, and an uncle who has before now instructed you in all holy things. This also I say that the bishops should know themselves to be priests not lords. Let them render to the clergy the honour which is their due, that the clergy may offer to them the respect which belongs to bishops. There is **a witty saying of the orator Domitius** which is here to the point: 'Why am I to recognize you as leader of the senate when you will not recognize my rights as a private member?' We should realize that a bishop and his presbyters are like Aaron and his sons. As there is but one Lord and one temple; so also should there be but one ministry. Let us ever bear in mind the charge which the apostle Peter gives to priests: 'Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof not by constraint but willingly as God would have you; not for filthy lucre but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage but being ensamples to the flock,' and that gladly; that 'when the chief shepherd shall appear ye may receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.' It is a bad custom which prevails in certain churches for presbyters to be silent when bishops are present on the ground that they would be jealous or impatient hearers. 'If anything,' writes the apostle Paul, 'be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. For ye may all prophesy one by one that all may learn and all may be comforted; and the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. For God is not the author of confusion but of peace.' 'A wise son maketh a glad father'; and a bishop should rejoice in the discrimination which has led him to choose such for the priests of Christ.

8 When teaching in church seek to call forth not plaudits but groans. Let the tears of your hearers be your glory. A presbyter's words ought to be seasoned by his reading of Scripture. Be not a declaimer or a ranter, one who gabbles without rhyme or reason; but show yourself skilled in the deep things and versed in the mysteries of God. To mouth your words and by your quickness of utterance astonish the unlettered crowd is a mark of ignorance. **Assurance** often explains that of which it knows nothing; and when it has convinced others imposes on itself. My teacher, Gregory of Nazianzus, when I once asked him to explain Luke's phrase *σάββατον δευτερόπρωτον*, that is, '**the second-first Sabbath**,' playfully evaded my request saying: 'I will tell you about it in church, and there, when the people applaud me, you will be forced against your will to know what you do not know at all. For if you alone remain silent, every one will put you down for a fool.' There is nothing so easy as by sheer volubility to deceive a common crowd or an uneducated congregation: such most admire what they fail to understand. Hear Marcus Tullius, the subject of that noble eulogy 'You would have been the first of orators but for Demosthenes; he would have been the only one but for you.' Hear what in his **speech for Quintus Gallius** he has to say about the unskilled speakers and popular applause and then you will not

be the sport of such illusions. 'What I am telling you,' said he, 'is a recent experience of my own. One who has the name of a poet and a man of culture has written a book entitled *Conversations of Poets and Philosophers*. In this he represents Euripides as conversing with Menander and Socrates with Epicurus – men whose lives we know to be separated not by years but by centuries. Nevertheless he calls forth **limitless applause** and endless acclamations. For the theatre contains many who belong to the same school as he: like him they have never learned letters.'

9 In dress avoid **sombre colours** as much as bright ones. Showiness **and slovenliness** are alike to be shunned; for the one savours of vanity and the other of pride. To go about **without a linen scarf** on is nothing: what is praiseworthy is to be without money to buy one. It is disgraceful and absurd to boast of having neither napkin nor handkerchief and yet to carry a well-filled purse.

Some bestow a trifle on the poor to receive a larger sum themselves and under the cloak of almsgiving do but seek for riches. Such are almshunters rather than almsgivers. Their methods are those by which birds, beasts, and fishes are taken. A morsel of bait is put on the hook – **to land a married lady's purse**! The church is committed to the bishop; let him take heed whom he appoints to be his almoner. It is better for me to have no money to give away than shamelessly to beg what I mean to hoard. It is arrogance too to wish to seem more liberal than he who is Christ's bishop. 'All things are not open to us all.' In the church one is the eye, another is the tongue, another the hand, another the foot, others ears, belly, and so on. Read Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians and learn how the one body is made up of different members. The rude and simple brother must not suppose himself a saint just because he knows nothing; and he who is educated and eloquent must not measure his saintliness merely by his fluency. Of two imperfect things holy rusticity is better than sinful eloquence.

10 Many build churches nowadays; their walls and pillars of glowing marble, their ceilings glittering with gold, their altars studded with jewels. Yet to the choice of Christ's ministers no heed is paid. And let no one allege against me the wealth of the temple in Judaea, its table, its lamps, its censers, its dishes, its cups, its spoons, and the rest of its golden vessels. If these were approved by the Lord it was at a time when the priests had to offer victims and when the blood of sheep was the redemption of sins. They were figures typifying things still future and were 'written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come.' But now our Lord by his poverty has consecrated the poverty of his house. Let us, therefore, think of his cross and count riches to be but dirt. Why do we admire what Christ calls 'the mammon of unrighteousness'? Why do we cherish and love what it is Peter's boast not to possess? Or if we insist on keeping to the letter and find the mention of gold and wealth so pleasing, let us keep to everything as well as the gold. Let the bishops of Christ be bound to marry wives, who must be virgins. Let the best-intentioned priest be deprived of his office if he bear a scar and be disfigured. Let bodily leprosy be

counted worse than spots upon the soul. Let us be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth, but let us slay no lamb and celebrate no mystic passover, for where there is no temple, the law forbids these acts. Let us pitch tents in the seventh month and noise abroad a solemn fast with the sound of a horn. But if we compare all these things as spiritual with things which are spiritual; and if we allow with Paul that 'the law is spiritual' and call to mind David's words: 'Open thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law'; and if on these grounds we interpret it as our Lord interprets it – he has explained the Sabbath in this way: then, rejecting the superstitions of the Jews, we must also reject the gold; or, approving the gold, we must approve the Jews as well. For we must either accept them with the gold or condemn them with it.

11 Avoid entertaining men of the world, especially those whose honours make them swell with pride. You are the priest of Christ – one poor and crucified who lived on the bread of strangers. It is a disgrace to you if the consul's lictors and soldiers keep watch before your door, and if the judge of the province has a better dinner with you than in his own palace. If you plead as an excuse your wish to intercede for the unhappy and the oppressed, I reply that a worldly judge will defer more to a clergyman who is self-denying than to one who is rich; he will pay more regard to your holiness than to your wealth. Or if he is a man who will not hear the clergy on behalf of the distressed except over the bowl, I will readily forego his aid and will appeal to Christ, who can help more effectively and speedily than any judge. Truly 'it is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes.'

Let your breath never smell of wine lest the philosopher's words be said to you: '**Instead of offering me a kiss** you are giving me a taste of wine.' Priests given to wine are both condemned by the Apostle and forbidden by the old law. Those who serve the altar, we are told, must drink neither wine nor *shechar*. Now every intoxicating drink is in Hebrew called *shechar* **whether it is made of corn or of the juice of apples**, whether **you distil from the honeycomb** a rude kind of mead or make a liquor by **squeezing dates** or strain a thick syrup from **a decoction of corn**. Whatever intoxicates and disturbs the balance of the mind avoid as you would wine. I do not say that we are to condemn what is a creature of God. The Lord himself was called a 'wine-bibber,' and wine in moderation was allowed to Timothy because of his weak stomach. I only require that drinkers should observe that limit which their age, their health, or their constitution requires. But if without drinking wine at all I am aglow with youth and am inflamed by the heat of my blood and am of a strong and lusty habit of body, I will readily forego the cup in which I cannot but suspect poison. The Greeks have an excellent saying **which will perhaps bear translation**: 'Fat bellies have no sentiments refined.'

12 Lay upon yourself only as much fasting as you can bear, and let your fasts be pure, chaste, simple, moderate, and not superstitious. What good is it to use no oil if

you seek after the most troublesome and out-of-the-way kinds of food, dried figs, pepper, nuts, dates, fine flour, honey, pistachios? All the resources of gardening are strained to save us from eating household bread; and to pursue dainties we turn our backs on the kingdom of heaven. There are some, I am told, who reverse the laws of nature and the race; for they neither eat bread nor drink water but imbibe thin decoctions of crushed herbs and beet-juice – **not from a cup but from a shell**. Shame on us that we have no blushes for such follies and that we feel no disgust at such superstition! To crown all, in the midst of our dainties we seek a reputation for abstinence. The strictest fast is bread and water. But because it brings with it no glory and because we all of us live on bread and water, it is reckoned no fast at all but an ordinary and common matter.

13 Do not angle for compliments, lest, while you win the popular applause, you do despite to God. 'If I yet pleased men,' says the Apostle, 'I should not be the servant of Christ.' He ceased to please men when he became Christ's servant. Christ's soldier marches on through good report and evil report, the one on the right hand and the other on the left. No praise elates him, no reproaches crush him. He is not puffed up by riches, nor does he shrink into himself because of poverty. Joy and sorrow he alike despises. The sun does not burn him by day nor the moon by night. Do not pray at the corners of the streets, lest the applause of men interrupt the straight course of your prayers. Do not broaden your fringes and for show wear **phylacteries**, or, despite of conscience, wrap yourself in the self-seeking of the Pharisee. Would you know what mode of apparel the Lord requires? Have prudence, justice, temperance, fortitude. Let these be **the four quarters of your horizon, let them be a four-horse team** to bear you, Christ's charioteer, at full speed to your goal. No necklace can be more precious than these; no gems can form a brighter galaxy. By them you are decorated, you are girt about, you are protected on every side. They are your defence as well as your glory; for every gem is turned into a shield.

14 Beware also of a blabbing tongue and of itching ears. Neither detract from others nor listen to detractors. 'Thou sittest,' says the psalmist, 'and speakest against thy brother; thou slanderest thine own mother's son. These things hast thou done and I kept silence; thou thoughtest wickedly that I was such an one as thyself, but I will reprove thee and set them in order before thine eyes.' Keep your tongue from cavilling and watch over your words. Know that in judging others you are passing sentence on yourself and that you are yourself guilty of the faults which you blame in them.' No one cares to speak to an unwilling listener. An arrow never lodges in a stone: often it recoils upon the shooter of it. Let the detractor learn from your unwillingness to listen not to be so ready to detract. Solomon says: 'Meddle not with them that are given to detraction: for their calamity shall rise suddenly; and who knoweth the destruction of them both?' – of the detractor, that is, and of the person who lends an ear to his detraction.

15 It is your duty to visit the sick, to know the homes and children of ladies who are

married, and to guard the secrets of noblemen. Make it your object, therefore, to keep your tongue chaste as well as your eyes. Never discuss a woman's figure nor let one house know what is going on in another. **Hippocrates**, before he will teach his pupils, makes them take an oath and compels them to swear fealty to him. He binds them over to silence, and prescribes for them their language, their gait, their dress, their manners. How much more reason have we to whom the medicine of the soul has been committed to love the houses of all Christians as our own homes. Let them know us as comforters in sorrow rather than as guests in time of mirth. That clergyman soon becomes an object of contempt who being often asked out to dinner never refuses to go.

16 Let us never seek for presents and rarely accept them when we are asked to do so. For '**it is more blessed to give** than to receive.' Somehow or other the very man who begs leave to offer you a gift holds you the cheaper for your acceptance of it; while, if you refuse it, it is wonderful how much more he will come to respect you. The preacher of continence must not be a maker of marriages. Why does he who reads the Apostle's words 'it remaineth that they that have wives be as though they had none' – why does he press a virgin to marry? Why does a priest, who must be a **monogamist**, urge a widow to marry again? How can the clergy be managers and stewards of other men's households, when they are bidden to disregard even their own interests? To wrest a thing from a friend is theft, but to cheat the church is sacrilege. When you have received money to be doled out to the poor, to be cautious or to hesitate while crowds are starving is to be worse than a robber; and to subtract a portion for yourself is to commit a crime of the deepest dye. I am tortured with hunger and are you to judge what will satisfy my cravings? Either divide immediately what you have received, or, if you are a timid almoner, send the donor to distribute his own gifts. Your purse ought not to remain full while I am in need. No one can look after what is mine better than I can. He is the best almoner who keeps nothing for himself.

17 You have compelled me, my dear Nepotian, in spite of the castigation which my treatise on virginity has had to endure – the one which I wrote for the saintly Eustochium at Rome – you have compelled me after ten years have passed once more to open my mouth at Bethlehem and to expose myself to the stabs of every tongue. For I could only escape from criticism by writing nothing – a course made impossible by your request; and I knew when I took up my pen that the shafts of all gainsayers would be launched against me. I beg such to hold their peace and to desist from gainsaying: for I have written to them not as to opponents but as to friends. I have not inveighed against those who sin: I have but warned them to sin no more. My judgment of myself has been as strict as my judgment of them. When I have wished to remove the mote from my neighbour's eye, I have first cast out the beam in my own. I have calumniated no one. Not a name has been hinted at. My words have not been aimed at individuals and my criticism of shortcomings has been quite general. If

anyone wishes to be angry with me he will have first to own that he himself suits my description.

Annotations

1 **Again and again you ask me** This part, which takes the place of an introduction, comprises the proposition and narration.
As a young man He seizes upon a commonplace on which in his usual manner he will digress before taking up the argumentation, a customary practice of some, as Quintilian testifies.[2] It is moreover a truism that wisdom flourishes most of all in the old. And although he says that he does not use 'terse and pointed aphorisms at the close of every paragraph,' nevertheless he does use them, albeit sparingly, as for example: 'There is danger for you in the service of one for whose face you constantly watch.'[3]
with the methods and maxims of the rhetoricians In my opinion the phrase 'and maxims' has been added.[4]
a dewlap ... hangs from my chin Virgil says this about the ox: 'And dewlaps hang from chin to legs.'[5] Here it refers to the chin of an old man. Dewlaps are the skin that hangs from the chin to the breast of an ox. The same thing happens to the aged when shrunken flesh makes the skin hang loose.
The chilly blood The poetry is from the fourth book of Virgil's *Georgics*: 'But if the chilly blood around my heart / Bar me from reaching those realms of nature ...'[6] Servius adds that the natural philosophers say that the stupid and dull have colder blood and the wiser warmer and that therefore old men and boys have less wisdom, for in the latter the blood is not yet warm and in the former it is already chilled by age.[7] According to book 12 of Pliny animals whose blood is thicker are braver and those whose blood is thinner are smarter.[8] Accordingly asses have the thickest blood and men the thinnest.
Old age bears all ... away This is also in Virgil, in the Eclogue entitled *Moerio*.[9] [In the Latin] the verb 'to bear' has been used instead of 'to bear away.' Nevertheless approaching age bears advantages with it; declining age bears them away.
even the mind For the mind loses its vigour later than the body, specifically in the forty-eighth year, while the body weakens in vigour after thirty-six years, according to Aristotle.[10]
are gone from me Virgil uses the verb passively.[11]

2 **David ... at seventy** This refers to 1 Kings, chapter 1.
farcical story [The Latin word in Jerome is *mimus*, and Erasmus

explains its double meaning:] Verses for the stage are called mimes, and those who write them are called mimes. The word comes from the Greek 'to imitate.' An actor only acts. Mimes act out the very same thing they write.

an Atellan play An Atellan play is a kind of comedy that is somewhat licentious and obscene, so called from the Oscan town of Atella, as Livy testifies in his eighth book.[12] Whence the word 'Atellan' also means 'obscene.'

Bathsheba was still living It is clear that David had four wives at the same time: Bathsheba, whom he had taken from Urias; Michal, who nevertheless married another; Abigail, the wife of Nabal; and Ahinoam, whom he received from Jezreel. See 1 Samuel, chapter 25.

I say nothing of the antediluvians Concerning these there is much in the fifth chapter of Genesis.

3 **the man of peace ... the man of war** With admirable grace he brings opposites together.

almsdeeds [The Latin word in Jerome is *eleemosyna*, and Erasmus comments on its pronunciation:] We defraud this word of a syllable, for we must pronounce it *eleemosyna*, although the Greek is ἐλεημοσύνη, which we understand to mean mercy.[13]

sleeping on the ground He has used a Greek word, *chameunia*, for what could not appropriately be said in Latin. It is composed of χαμαί 'on the ground' and εὐνή 'bed'; hence χαμευνία refers to anyone who lies down to sleep on the bare ground.

Plato ... eighty-first year The authority for this is Cicero in his *Cato maior*.[14]

Isocrates Lucian writes that he lived for ninety-nine years.[15] Cicero in the *Cato maior* reports that the book entitled *Panathenaicus* was written by him in his ninety-fourth year and that he lived for five years thereafter.[16]

Pythagoras He lived ninety years, according to Diogenes Laertius.[17]

Democritus He means the natural philosopher of Abdera, who lived a hundred and four years, as Lucian writes in *Longaevi*, a piece I once translated.[18] Hipparchus in Diogenes Laertius, however, allotted a hundred and nine years to him.[19]

Xenocrates This disciple of Plato lived to be eighty-four.

Zeno This Stoic lived to be ninety-eight, according to Lucian.[20]

Cleanthes If we believe Lucian he lived into his hundredth year.[21]

Homer The poets called him the aged Maeonian.[22]

Hesiod The longevity of this man also gave rise to the proverb 'Hesiodic old age,' about which see my *Adagiorum chiliades*.[23]

Simonides This lyric poet in his eightieth year boasts both that he taught himself poetry and that he competed with other poets. The authority is Valerius in the eighth book in the chapter 'De studio et industria.'[24] Lucian in *Longaevi* relates that he lived more than ninety years.[25]

Stesichorus This is the one who lost his sight when he berated Helen and recovered it when he praised her. He lived almost to his hundredth year, according to the *Suidas*.[26]

a swan song Among the Greeks the phrase 'a swan song' is proverbial in refering to the eloquence of the old.[27] Nearly all the poets in their writings frequently declare that the swan at the approach of death sings his sweetest song, although no one has heard him singing.

Sophocles This writer of tragedies lived for ninety-five years, according to Lucian.[28] The story Jerome tells is reported by Valerius in his seventh book and by Cicero in his *Cato maior*.[29]

Cato the Censor He studied even Latin literature late in life, as Valerius reports, but Greek literature much later.[30] He was called 'the Censor' because of his stricter carrying out of the duties of censor.

from the tongue of Nestor According to Homer he lived for three generations of men, that is for a hundred and fifty years, as some understand it. Of his honey-sweet eloquence there is that well-known praise of Homer in the first book of the *Iliad*: 'And from his tongue there flowed speech sweeter than honey.'[31]

The term 'over and above' [Jerome has used the Latin word *superfluus*, and Erasmus comments:] The Greek equivalent περισσός is ambiguous because it means 'superfluous' as well as 'outstanding' and 'overflowing.' Jerome here then is thinking of the Greek term, not the Latin.

'These are they which came ...' This was said concerning the family of scribes who remained in their tents singing and repeating their songs. These are the Kenites who 'came from the warmth of the house of the father of Rechab.' 1 Chronicles, chapter 2.

'... and fain am I to see it kindled.' From an ancient copy as well as from Greek manuscripts I restored the true reading, as I also indicated in my annotations on the New Testament.[32]

4 **at the close of every paragraph** He is thinking of terse exclamations and lively applause.[33] We commented on this above.[34]

5 **'Their portion shall not profit them.'** The Vulgate text, which in this passage agrees with the Hebrew, reads thus. It is a passage from the prophet Jeremiah, chapter 12: 'They have sown wheat and have reaped thorns; they have received their portion, and it shall not profit

them.' The Septuagint to be sure has another version: 'You sow wheat, and you have reaped thorns; their clergy shall not profit them.' I conjecture from this that *cleri*, that is, 'portion,' should be read and not *clerici* 'clergy,' and I have found this reading in the ancient manuscripts.[35] For not only is the episcopal office of no profit but it is even a stumbling block unless it is accompanied by sacred learning and the other virtues proper to a bishop.

and apothecaries' shops He means pharmacies, where, as also in barber shops, one sits down with the idle and garrulous, a practice that persists even today in Venice.

an acolyte or a psalm-singer The Greek word ἀκώλυτος means 'not debarred,' that is, 'admitted,' and it was given to one who though he himself did not conduct the mysteries was not excluded with the others since he brought the fire or some other requisite for the sacred rites. It is worth having a laugh at Isidore's novel interpretation in distinctio 21 in the *Decretum*.[36] He says that 'acolytes' are called 'candle-bearers' in Latin. In a similar example of stupidity he interprets the Greek word 'metropolis' as 'the size of cities' although the Greek is μητρόπολις, not μετρόπολις.[37] And this error of Isidore's is followed by the Master of the Sentences, the blind leading the blind.[38] Nevertheless it is not out of place to read ἀκόλουθος in this passage, for it is the Greek word for a servant who is always in attendance and is derived from the verb 'to follow.'[39]

psalm-singer The term is Greek; the Latin word is *cantor*.

tongs Tongs are long needles which are heated and used to curl hair.

6 **by Christian emperors** It should be noted in this passage that the clergy had once been prohibited by imperial law from inheriting property. Finally since St Jerome throughout this letter wants priests to be poor in material goods but rich in learning and piety he does not fully agree with the general view in our day which holds that the church is strengthened and adorned above all by worldly wealth.

Cauterizing Derived from the Greek verb 'to burn,' it is a means of burning out incurable imperfections. Jerome alludes to the adage that good laws are the product of bad customs.[40]

a fiction of trusteeship It is not a question of a true heir but of the authority of one who administers an estate. There is much in the *Pandects* about this.[41]

imperial decrees Laws and regulations are called decrees.

millet Millet, a variety of leguminous plant, is very cheap.

household bread Household bread is not entirely free of bran and is called 'seconds.' For that which comes through the sieve as the purest

and finest flour is called the prime wheat flour, that which comes next is 'seconds,' and that which comes last is bran, according to Pliny in Book 18.[42]

the finest wheat flour and honey *Simila* [the word Jerome uses] is also nearly the best or whitest part of the flour and is used more in sauces than in bread. Honey was added to wine to make mulled wine, which was once a favourite drink.

on what coast a mussel He is thinking of oysters and sea-urchins. He alludes to the lines in Juvenal: 'He could tell from the first bite whether the oysters came from the Lucrine rocks or the Rutupian beds. And he once named on sight the shore whence a sea-urchin came.'[43] Concerning this reference see Aulus Gellius, book 7, chapter 16.

ruinous cost They were bought at great expense. According to the passage in Juvenal to which he alluded those delicacies give more pleasure because they cost more.

the basin *Matula* [the word in Jerome's text] or *matella* is a vessel used for urine. It was the duty of the meanest slave to offer this basin to his master. Whence it was said proverbially: he is unworthy of offering the basin to him. I have explained this more fully in the *Adagia*.[44]

Methuselah No one had a longer life than he, for he lived nine hundred and nine years.

7 **'Hold fast ...'** He repeats Paul's words to Titus.[45]

'Continue thou ...' Thus Paul to Timothy.[46]

'be ready always ...' Thus Peter in his first Letter, chapter 3.[47]

'If I be a father ...' Thus Malachi, chapter 1: 'A son honours his father and a slave his master. If then I be a father where is mine honour? And if I be a master where is my fear?'[48]

a witty saying of the orator Domitius What Jerome attributes to Domitius, Valerius ascribes to Lucius Crassus, a man of the greatest dignity and eloquence. When the consul Lucius Philippus in the senate ordered his arrest Crassus scorned the lictor and said: 'You are not in my eyes a consul, Philippus, because in your eyes I am not a senator.' Book 6, chapter 'De libere dictis.'[49]

8 **Assurance**[50] Shameless or rubbed over. The expression has the flavour of a proverb.

'the second-first Sabbath' The term in Greek is a compound of 'second' and 'first' because Luke appears to disagree with John about the day of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. John writes that he arose at the first hour of the Sabbath and that the women came very early in the morning to the tomb. On the other hand Luke relates that they rested on the Sabbath and after having observed the Sabbath came with

spices.[51] Here and elsewhere there seems to be some disagreement among the evangelists, but this is not the place to discuss the matter.

speech for Quintus Gallius This speech is not extant. Also this passage in Jerome seems to me to be not altogether correct.

limitless applause Regardless of the absurdity of the material the crowd nevertheless applauded. Pliny in one of his letters says: 'Be assured that the worst orator will be praised the most.'[52] This has never been more true than today.

9 **sombre colours** Sombre [*pulla*] means black. Whence mourners are called the sombre clad [*pullati*] because they wear black in their mourning. On the other hand white garments were once the apparel of princes and those celebrating a triumph.

and slovenliness Between showiness and slovenliness the mean is neatness.

without a linen scarf The wearing of linen was once considered hardly proper for a man, as was pointed out above.[53] Pliny has much to say about the price of linen.[54]

to land a married lady's purse There is also another reading: 'to land larger little fish.' The former reading pleases me more, although it does not seem to be entirely correct.[55]

11 **'Instead of offering me a kiss'** At one time a consul greeted a commander of an army with a kiss, as did a student his teacher.

whether it is made of corn Pliny in book 14, last chapter, writes: 'The people of the West also have their intoxicating drink of steeped grain.'[56] The Gauls call this drink *cervisia*, the Spanish *celia*, the Egyptians *zythum*.[57]

or of the juice of apples This is called cider. Virgil writes: 'With bitter juice they mimic draughts of wine.'[58]

you distil from the honeycomb He means mead, which is made from water and honey. See Pliny, book 14, chapter 17.[59] The Phrygians used to drink this.

squeezing dates The Parthians as well as the people of India and all the East had a drink of this kind, according to Pliny.[60]

a decoction of corn It is made also from other herbs and plants. On this see Pliny in book 14, chapter 16.[61]

which will perhaps bear translation [Erasmus gives the Greek trimeter of the saying Jerome quotes, translates it into Latin, as did Jerome, and then gives a Latin verse rendition.] Further, as for Jerome's concern about the beauty of the Greek verse the reader should know that there is wit in the ambiguity of *pinguis* and *tenuis* [the Latin words Jerome uses for 'fat' and 'refined']. For *pinguis* means not

only 'obese' but also 'stupid' and 'slow' or 'dull.' Likewise *tenuis* means 'thin' and 'discriminating.' For the body is said to be *tenue* 'thin.' And Horace in his *Satires* used *res tenues* to mean 'keen' and 'discriminating.'[62] Therefore when Jerome says *venter pinguis* 'fat belly' he means obese, and when he says *mens tenuis* he understands 'keen,' and he has turned around the sense of that word, playing meanwhile on his use of the word *pinguis*.

12 **not from a cup but from a shell** Virgil writes: 'To drink from a shell and sleep on a bed of Tyrian purple.'[63] It is more delightful to drink from a shell than from a cup.

13 **phylacteries** The outermost borders of clothes are so called because they protect and preserve the garment or rather because the commandments of the law were inscribed and preserved in them lest they be forgotten. Moses had ordered that on the four corners of their cloaks the Hebrews should make hyacinthine fringes as a sign of their dress as an Israelite, just as circumcision is a sign on their bodies.[64] And so the superstitious used to make broad fringes and tie very sharp thorns in them that they might be reminded even in that way of divine worship. Nevertheless some think that phylacteries are parchments on which the Decalogue of Moses was written and which were worn on the forehead.[65] Jerome wrote in his *Commentary on Matthew* that this practice lasted even to his own time.[66]

the four quarters of your horizon ... a four-horse team He alludes to the four-horse team of the prophet Elisha, concerning which see 2 Kings, chapter 13.

15 **Hippocrates** This oath of Hippocrates is in medical books and is too well known to require a reference here.

16 **'it is more blessed to give ...'** This maxim is cited by St Paul in Acts, chapter 20, in the same sense.[67]

a monogamist [Erasmus points out that the word is a compound of the Greek for 'marriage' and 'one.'] The man who has been married twice is not admitted to the priesthood even if the second marriage antedated his baptism.[68] Yet in ancient times only bishops were called priests [that is, *sacerdotes*] and also presbyters, although afterwards presbyters began to be distinguished from priests. Also the Greek word for those who have been married twice is δίγαμοι, not *bigami*.

Antidote[69]

In this letter, in which he does not exhort but prescribes rules for living, he seems to demand complete poverty from clerics, that is, from presbyters and

priests and also bishops, when he says 'He who possesses the Lord, and who says with the prophet, "The Lord is my portion," can hold to nothing besides the Lord. For if he hold to something besides the Lord, the Lord will not be his portion. Suppose, for instance, that he holds to gold or silver, or possessions or inlaid furniture; with such portions as these the Lord will not deign to be his portion.' What are you saying, most saintly Jerome? Do you deny these are clerics, do you deny that the Lord wishes to have a portion with those who have landed estates, who have gold in their coffers, who have silver in their money bags, who have household furniture? Even if those possessions fell to their lot by inheritance? What will you do in the case of so many Christian priests so wealthy that secular rulers envy them? What will you do in the case of bishops who possess so many towns, not to speak about landed estates? What will you do in the case of supreme pontiffs who even wage war for wealth and property? Indeed we do not disapprove of these men, even to the extent that we would not number you among the saints except that you found approval in their pronouncements. Through them we are all Christians. By their authority we are united with Christ or we are separated from Christ. And not only do we believe that the Lord has a portion with them, but we are even convinced that the spirit of Christ is sheltered in their bosom. And what is more, we are not offended in the face of their regal expenditures by the palaces they rear up to the heavens, by the swarms of their servants, by their guards armed with the sword, by their squadrons of horse, by the brilliance everywhere of jewels, gold, and purple. Indeed we believe that all this pomp and clamour are part of the splendour of the church. But I, without prejudice to the judgment of others, think that Jerome's prescriptions here ought to be classified among the counsels, not among the commands. And I think that Jerome was excessively forceful here for this reason: in his time, when true piety was already in decline among clerics, a great number of them felt the attraction of worldly pride and the desire for riches, although the proper riches of priests are heavenly, not earthly, that is, sacred learning, a spirit contemptuous of everything admired by the foolish multitude, a blameless life, the gain of having drawn many to Christ, the triumph of the martyrs. Because of the increasing wealth of the church St Jerome also complains elsewhere that the appeal of those true riches has been greatly reduced. Consequently he thought that this worsening disease must be treated, and to this end he endeavoured to draw clerics to poverty so that at least they might follow a middle course and be content with a moderate use of wealth.

Postscript

In the same letter he approves of an imperial law which had once prohibited

monks or clerics from receiving legacies, even though that law seems unjust. Again he intimates that the gospel teachings are in accord with what the imperial laws enjoin when he says: 'And, as if imperial decrees outweigh the mandates of Christ, we fear the laws and despise the Gospels.'

Postscript

This moreover is what follows: 'It is the glory of a bishop to make provision for the wants of the poor; but it is the shame of all priests to amass private fortunes.' By no means does Jerome condemn priests who possess wealth, but he does condemn those who strive for it. We strive for that objective on which we place the highest value, and we bend every effort to obtain it for ourselves. He also condemns bishops who for profane and wicked purposes amass wealth that should be laid up for the support of the poor. Finally in these matters consideration must be given to the times. For there is a very great difference between that original and primitive church of Christ and this church of our time. In those days, bereft of every advantage of this world, she was strong with the strength of Christ alone, and she flourished all the more gloriously thereby the further she kept from worldly advantages. Then gradually wealth came to her, and the favour of princes now Christian also came to her. Finally property came to her, power came to her. Whether or not this is in accord with the philosophy of Christ I leave to the judgment of others. We are writing annotations, not articles of faith. Indeed the truly devout are disposed to wish that all these goods, once acquired and accepted (if their rejection is out of the question), be used not for the sake of pride and pleasure but for the general welfare of the church, and that they be possessed as if not possessed and not thought as contributing to the splendour of Christ's religion but more to its burdens. Therefore those holy men of old, since they were nearer to the time of the apostles and still breathed that pure spirit of Christ undefiled by the goods of the world, produced numerous writings very much at variance with the pattern of these times; I may cite Jerome, Ambrose, Bernard, not to mention the Greeks. Our first reaction however should not be to cavil at their writings but rather to use them for the amendment of our lives and to consider more suspect our ways, which are so different from the teachings of the holiest men, who, faithful to the precepts of Christ and the apostles and inspired by the spirit of Christ, have given to the world pronouncements with which our precepts may perhaps agree but certainly not our lives. Let us establish a way of life that would obviate the necessity of twisting the teachings of Christ to conform with our behaviour and the traditions of men. Rather let us adjust our whole life and our principles to the true and pure model of Christ. And I do not indeed have any doubts that there are very many

bishops of good will, and especially Leo x of our day, eminently endowed as he is with all the gifts of an eminent pontiff, who see much that they want changed. But being aware of so many difficulties involved, they are afraid that the application of less than appropriate remedies might lead to greater danger, and they wish for rather than demand what is best, and they prescribe not what is closest to Christ but what the circumstances of the time make possible – a situation that confronted Paul himself in his day.

LETTER 3

JEROME TO EUSTOCHIUM ON GUARDING VIRGINITY

This letter and Erasmus' summary, annotations, antidote, and addendum are in HO I 60–9. The letter is Ep 22 in PL, Fremantle, and Hilberg. Written to a daughter of Paula, a wealthy Roman matron and an ardent follower, it is perhaps Jerome's most famous letter. Although addressed as a letter to Eustochium, it is in fact a treatise on virginity as a way of life and on the pitfalls and vices that block that path. It contains the famous account of Jerome's 'dream,' which Erasmus discusses in a lengthy annotation (section 30).

A summary of the following letter[1]

Of all the children of Paula, Eustochium alone embraced perpetual virginity, and she alone accompanied her mother on her journey to Bethlehem. Jerome therefore uses her example, since she was in the highest rank of Roman nobility, to teach all virgins how they ought to live. And in fulfilling the office of the good teacher he not only presents the model one should follow but also reveals and lays bare the tricks and deceits of virgins, monks, and clerics who under the pretext of chastity were serving their bellies and their greed. In depicting these individuals his treatment was a bit too frank for the tender ears of some. Whence he writes in another place that this treatise had been assailed at Rome (for he wrote it there), and in a letter to Demetrias he declares that many were offended by it.[2] Also Rufinus among other accusations lays on this most holy man the charge of parading all manner of vice while professing to instruct a virgin.[3] Sulpicius Severus also mentions this in one of his dialogues, though with approval.[4] But if this work handles bad monks and clerics roughly it has in turn been roughly handled by them. For in fact I have found the text so faulty that for every vice reproached they seem to have introduced ten mistakes.

Text of Jerome's Letter

1 'Hear, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own

people and thy father's house, and the king shall desire thy beauty.' In this forty-fourth psalm God speaks to the human soul that, following the example of Abraham, it should go out from its own land and from its kindred, and should leave the Chaldeans, that is the demons, and should dwell in the country of the living, for which elsewhere the prophet sighs: 'I think to see the good things of the Lord in the land of the living.' But it is not enough for you to go out from your own land unless you forget your people and your father's house; unless you scorn the flesh and cling to the bridegroom in a close embrace. **'Look not behind thee,' he says,** 'neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain lest thou be consumed.' He who has grasped the plough must not look behind him or return home from the field, or, having Christ's garment, descend from the roof to fetch other raiment. Truly a marvellous thing, a father charges his daughter not to remember her father. 'Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do.' So it was said to the Jews. And in another place, 'He that committeth sin is of the devil.' Born, in the first instance, of such parentage we are naturally black, and even when we have repented, so long as we have not scaled the heights of virtue, we may still say: 'I am black but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem.' But you will say to me, 'I have left the home of my childhood; I have forgotten my father, I am born anew in Christ. What reward do I receive for this?' The context shows – 'The king shall desire thy beauty.' This, then, is the great mystery. 'For this cause shall a man leave his father and his mother and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be,' not as is there said, 'of one flesh,' but 'of one spirit.' Your bridegroom is not haughty or disdainful; he has 'married an Ethiopian woman.' When once you desire the wisdom of the true Solomon and come to him, he will avow all his knowledge to you; he will lead you into his chamber with his royal hand; he will miraculously change your complexion so that it shall be said of you, 'Who is this that goeth up and hath been made white?'

2 I write to you thus, Lady Eustochium (I am bound to call my Lord's bride 'lady'), to show you by my opening words that my object is not to praise the virginity which you follow, and of which you have proved the value, or yet to recount the drawbacks of marriage, such as pregnancy, the crying of infants, the torture caused by a rival, the cares of household management, and all those fancied blessings which death at last cuts short. Not that married women are as such outside the pale; they have their own place, the marriage that is honourable and the bed undefiled. My purpose is to show you that you are fleeing from Sodom and should take warning by Lot's wife. There is no flattery, I can tell you, in these pages. A flatterer's words are fair, but for all that he is an enemy. You need expect no rhetorical flourishes setting you among the angels and, while they extol virginity as blessed, putting the world at your feet.

3 I would have you draw from your monastic vow not pride but fear. You walk laden

with gold; you must keep out of the robber's way. To us men this life is a racecourse; we contend here, we are crowned elsewhere. No man can lay aside fear while serpents and scorpions beset his path. The Lord says: 'My sword hath drunk its fill in heaven,' and do you expect to find peace on the earth? No, the earth yields only thorns and thistles, and its dust is food for the serpent. 'For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.' We are hemmed in by hosts of foes, our enemies are upon every side. The weak flesh will soon be ashes: one against many, it fights against tremendous odds. Not till it has been dissolved, not till the Prince of this world has come and found no sin therein, not till then may you safely listen to the prophet's words: 'Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night nor for the arrow that flieth by day; nor for the trouble which haunteth thee in darkness; nor for the demon and his attacks at noonday. A thousand shall fall at thy side and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee.' When the hosts of the enemy distress you, when your frame is fevered and your passions roused, when you say in your heart, 'What shall I do?' Elisha's words shall give you your answer, 'Fear not, for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.' He shall pray, 'Lord, open the eyes of thine handmaid that she may see.' And then when your eyes have been opened you shall see a fiery chariot like Elijah's waiting to carry you to heaven, and shall joyfully sing: 'Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken and we are escaped.'

4 So long as we are held down by this frail body, so long as we have our treasure in earthen vessels; so long as the flesh lusteth against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh, there can be no sure victory. 'Our adversary the devil goeth about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour.' 'Thou makest darkness,' David says, 'and it is night: wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth. The young lions roar after their prey and seek their meat from God.' The devil looks not for unbelievers, **for those who are without**, whose flesh the Assyrian king roasted in the furnace. It is the church of Christ that he 'makes haste to spoil.' According to Habakkuk, **'His food is of the choicest.'** A Job is the victim of his machinations, **and after devouring Judas** he seeks power to sift the [other] apostles. The Saviour came not to send peace upon the earth but a sword. Lucifer fell, Lucifer who used to rise at dawn; and he who was bred in a paradise of delight had the well-earned sentence passed upon him, 'Though thou exalt thy self as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the Lord.' For he had said in his heart, 'I will exalt my throne above the stars of God,' and 'I will be like the Most High.' Wherefore God says every day to the angels, as they descend the ladder that Jacob saw in his dreams, 'I have said ye are gods and all of you are children of the Most High. But ye shall die like men and fall like one of the princes.' The devil fell first, and since 'God standeth in the congregation of the gods and judgeth among the gods,'

the Apostle writes to those who are ceasing to be gods: 'Whereas there is among you envying and strife, are ye not carnal and walk as men?'

5 If, then, the Apostle, who was a chosen vessel separated unto the gospel of Christ, by reason of the pricks of the flesh and the allurements of vice keeps under his body and brings it into subjection, lest when he has preached to others he may himself be cast away; and yet, for all that, sees another law in his members warring against the law of his mind and bringing him into captivity to the law of sin; if after nakedness, fasting, hunger, imprisonment, scourging, and other torments, he turns back to himself and cries: 'Oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' do you fancy that you ought to lay aside apprehension? See to it that God say not some day of you: 'The virgin of Israel is fallen and there is none to raise her up.' I will say it boldly, though God can do all things he cannot raise up a virgin once she has fallen. He may indeed relieve one who is defiled from the penalty of her sin, but He will not give her a crown. **Let us fear** lest in us also the prophesy be fulfilled, 'Good virgins shall faint.' Notice that it is good virgins who are spoken of, for there are bad ones as well. 'Whosoever looketh on a woman,' the Lord says, 'to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.' So that virginity may be lost even by a thought. Such are evil virgins, virgins in the flesh, not in the spirit; foolish virgins, who, having no oil, are shut out by the Bridegroom.

6 But if even real virgins, when they have other failings, are not saved by their physical virginity, what shall become of those who have prostituted the members of Christ, and have changed the temple of the Holy Ghost into a brothel? Straightway shall they hear the words: '**Come down and sit in the dust**, O virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground; there is no throne, O daughter of the Chaldaeans: for thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate. Take the millstone and grind meal; uncover thy locks, make bare the legs, pass over the rivers; thy nakedness shall be uncovered, yea, thy shame shall be seen.' And shall she come to this after the bridal chamber of God the Son, after the kisses of him who is to her both kinsman and spouse? Yes, **she** of whom the prophetic utterance once sang, 'Upon thy right hand did stand the queen in a vesture of gold wrought about with divers colours,' **shall be made naked, and her skirts** shall be discovered upon her face. She shall sit by the waters of loneliness, her pitcher laid aside; and **shall open her feet to every one that passeth by, and shall be polluted to the crown of her head**. Better had it been for her to have submitted to the yoke of marriage, to have walked in level places, than thus, aspiring to loftier heights, to fall into the deep of hell. I pray you, let not Zion the faithful city become a harlot; let it not be that where the Trinity has been entertained, there demons shall dance **and owls make their nests**, and jackals build. Let us not loose the belt that binds the breast. When lust tickles the sense and the soft fire of sensual pleasure sheds over us its pleasing glow, let us immediately break forth and cry: 'The Lord is on my side: I will not fear what the flesh can do unto me.' When the inner man shows signs for a time of wavering between vice and virtue, say: 'Why art

thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him who is the health of my countenance and my God.' You must never let suggestions of evil grow on you, or a babel of disorder win strength in your breast. Slay the enemy while he is small; and, that you may not have a crop of tares, nip the evil in the bud. Bear in mind the warning words of the psalmist: 'Hapless daughter of Babylon, happy shall he be that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us. Happy shall he be that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones.' Because natural heat inevitably kindles in a man sensual passion, he is praised and accounted happy who, when foul suggestions arise in his mind, gives them no quarter, but dashes them instantly against the rock. 'Now the Rock is Christ.'

7 How often, when I was living in the desert, in the vast solitude which gives to hermits a savage dwelling-place, parched by a burning sun, how often did I fancy myself among the pleasures of Rome! I used to sit alone because I was filled with bitterness. Sackcloth disfigured my unshapely limbs and my skin from long neglect had become as black as an Ethiopian's. Tears and groans were every day my portion; and if drowsiness chanced to overcome my struggles against it, my bare bones, which hardly held together, clashed against the ground. Of my food and drink I say nothing: for, even in sickness, the solitaries have nothing but cold water, and to eat one's food cooked is looked upon as self-indulgence. Now, although in my fear of hell I had consigned myself to this prison, where I had no companions but scorpions and wild beasts, I often found myself amid bevies of girls. My face was pale and my frame chilled with fasting; yet my mind was burning with desire, and the fires of lust kept bubbling up **before me** when my flesh was as good as dead. Helpless, I cast myself at the feet of Jesus, I watered them with my tears, I wiped them with my hair: and then I subdued my rebellious body with weeks of abstinence. I do not blush to avow my abject misery; rather I lament that I am not now what I once was. I remember how I often cried aloud all night until the break of day and ceased not from beating my breast till tranquillity returned at the chiding of the Lord. I used to dread my very cell as though it knew my thoughts; and, stern and angry with myself, I used to make my way alone into the desert. Wherever I saw hollow valleys, craggy mountains, steep cliffs, there I made my oratory, there the house of correction for my unhappy flesh. There, also – the Lord himself is my witness – when I had shed copious tears and had strained my eyes towards heaven, I sometimes felt myself among angelic hosts, and for joy and gladness sang: 'Because of the savour of thy good ointments we will run after thee.'

8 Now, if such are the temptations of men who, since their bodies are emaciated with fasting, have only evil thoughts to fear, how must it fare with a girl whose surroundings are those of luxury and ease? Surely, to use the Apostle's words, 'She is dead while she liveth.' Therefore, if experience gives me a right to advise, or clothes my words with credit, I would begin by urging you and warning you as

Christ's spouse to avoid wine as you would avoid poison. For wine is the first weapon used by demons against the young. Greed does not shake, nor pride puff up, nor ambition infatuate so much as this. Other vices we easily escape, but this enemy is shut up within us, and wherever we go we carry him with us. Wine and youth between them kindle the fire of sensual pleasure. Why do we throw oil on the flame – why do we add fresh fuel to a miserable body which is already ablaze. Paul, it is true, says to Timothy, 'drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake, and for thine often infirmities.' But notice the reasons for which the permission is given, to cure an aching stomach and a frequent infirmity. And lest we should indulge ourselves too much on the score of our ailment, he commands that but little shall be taken; advising rather as a physician than as an apostle (though, indeed, an apostle is a spiritual physician). He evidently feared that Timothy might succumb to weakness, and might prove unequal to the constant moving to and fro involved in preaching the gospel. Besides, he remembered that he had spoken of 'wine wherein is excess,' and had said, 'it is good neither to eat flesh nor to drink wine.' Noah drank wine and became intoxicated; but living as he did in the rude age after the flood, when the vine was first planted, perhaps he did not know its power of inebriation. And to let you see the hidden meaning of Scripture in all its fullness (for the word of God is a pearl and may be pierced on every side) after his drunkeness came the uncovering of his body; self-indulgence culminated in lust. First the belly is crammed; then the other members are roused. Similarly, at a later period, 'The people sat down to eat and to drink and rose up to play.' Lot also, God's friend, whom he saved upon the mountain, who was the only one found righteous out of so many thousands, was intoxicated by his daughters. And, although they may have acted as they did more from a desire of offspring than from love of sinful pleasure – for the human race seemed in danger of extinction – yet they were well aware that the righteous man would not abet their design unless intoxicated. In fact he did not know what he was doing, and his sin was not wilful. Still his error was a grave one, **for it made him the father of Moab** and Ammon, Israel's enemies, of whom it is said: 'Even to the fourteenth generation they shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord forever.'

9 When Elijah, in his flight from Jezebel, lay weary and desolate beneath the oak, there came an angel who raised him up and said, 'Arise and eat.' And he looked, and behold **there was a cake** and a cruse of water at his head. Had God willed it, might he not have sent his prophet **spiced wines** and dainty dishes and **flesh basted into tenderness**? When Elisha invited the sons of the prophets to dinner, he only gave them field-herbs to eat; and when all cried out with one voice: 'There is death in the pot,' the man of God did not storm at the cooks (for he was not used to very sumptuous fare), but caused meal to be brought, and casting it in, sweetened the bitter mess with spiritual strength as Moses had once **sweetened the waters of Mara**. Again, **when men were sent** to arrest the prophet, and were smitten with physical

and mental blindness, that he might bring them without their own knowledge to Samaria, notice the good with which Elisha ordered them to be refreshed. 'Set bread and water,' he said, 'before them, that they may eat and drink and go to their master.' And Daniel, who might have had rich food from the king's table, preferred the mower's breakfast, brought to him by Habakkuk, which must have been but country fare. He was called 'a man of desires,' because he would not eat the bread of desire or drink the wine of concupiscence.

10 There are, in the Scriptures, countless **divine answers** condemning gluttony and approving simple food. But as fasting is not my present theme and an adequate discussion of it would require a treatise to itself, these few observations must suffice of the many which the subject suggests. By them you will understand why the first man, obeying his belly and not God, was cast down from paradise into this vale of tears; and why Satan used hunger to tempt the Lord himself in the wilderness; and why the Apostle cries: 'Meats for the belly and the belly for meats, but God shall destroy both it and them;' and why he speaks of the self-indulgent as men 'whose God is their belly.' For men invariably worship what they like best. Care must be taken, therefore, that abstinence may bring back to paradise those whom satiety once drove out.

11 You will tell me, perhaps, that, high-born as you are, reared in luxury and used to lie softly, you cannot do without wine and dainties, and would find a stricter rule of life unendurable. If so, I can only say: 'Live, then, by your own rule, since God's rule is too hard for you.' Not that the creator and lord of all takes pleasure in a rumbling and empty stomach, or in fevered lungs; but that these are indispensable as means to the preservation of chastity. Job was dear to God, perfect and upright before him; yet hear what he says of the devil: 'His strength is in the loins, and his force is in the navel.'

The terms are chosen for decency's sake, but the reproductive organs of the two sexes are meant. Thus, the descendant of David, who, according to the promise is to sit upon his throne, is said to come from his loins. And the seventy-five souls descended from Jacob who entered Egypt are said to come out of his thigh. So, also, when his thigh shrank after the Lord had wrestled with him, he ceased to beget children. The Israelites, again, are told to celebrate the Passover with loins girded and mortified. God says to Job: 'Gird up thy loins to carry the lamps of the gospel. When Ezekiel tells us how Jerusalem is found in the plain of wandering, covered with blood, he uses the words: 'Thy navel has not been cut.' In his assaults on men, therefore, the devil's strength is in the loins; in his attacks on women his force is in the navel.

12 Do you wish for proof of my assertions? Take examples. Sampson was braver than a lion and tougher than a rock; alone and unprotected he pursued a thousand armed men; and yet, in Delilah's embrace, his resolution melted away. David was a man after God's own heart, and his lips had often sung of the holy one, the future

Christ; and yet as he walked upon his housetop he was fascinated by Bathsheba's nudity, and added murder to adultery. Notice here now, even in his own house, a man cannot use his eyes without danger. Then repenting, he says to the Lord: 'Against thee, thee only, have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight.' Being a king he feared no one else. So, too, with Solomon. Wisdom used him to sing her praise, and he treated of all plants 'from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall;' and yet he went back from God because he was a lover of women. And, as if to show that near relationship is no safeguard, Amnon burned with illicit passion for his sister Tamar.

13 I cannot bring myself to speak of the many virgins who daily fall and are lost to the bosom of the church, their mother: **stars over which the proud foe** sets up his throne, and rocks hollowed by the serpent that he may dwell in their fissures. You may see many women widows before wedded, who try to conceal their miserable fall by a lying garb. Unless they are betrayed by swelling wombs or by the crying of their infants, they walk abroad **with tripping feet** and heads in the air. Some go so far as to take potions, **that they may insure barrenness**, and thus murder human beings almost before their conception. Some, when they find themselves with child through their sin, use drugs to procure abortion, and when (as often happens) they die with their offspring, they enter the lower world laden with the guilt not only of adultery against Christ but also of suicide and child murder. Yet it is these who say: '"Unto the pure all things are pure"; my conscience is sufficient guide for me. A pure heart is what God looks for. Why should I abstain from meats which God has created to be received with thanksgiving?' And when **they wish to appear** agreeable and entertaining they first drench themselves with wine, and then joining the grossest profanity to intoxication, they say: 'Far be it from me to abstain from the blood of Christ.' And when they see another pale or sad **they call her 'wretch' or 'Manichaean;' quite logically**, indeed, for on their principles fasting involves heresy. When they go out they do their best to attract notice, and with nods and winks encourage troops of young fellows to follow them. Of each and all of these the prophet's words are true: 'Thou hast a whore's forehead; thou refusest to be ashamed.' **Their robes have but a narrow purple stripe**, it is true; and their head-dress is somewhat loose, **so as to leave the hair free. From their shoulders flutters the lilac mantle** which they call 'maforte'; they have their feet in **cheap slippers** and their arms tucked up **tight-fitting sleeves**. Add to these marks of their profession **an easy gait**, and you have all the virginity that they possess. Such may have eulogizers of their own, and may fetch **a higher price in the market of perdition, merely because they are called virgins**. But to such virgins as these I prefer to be displeasing.

14 I blush to speak of it, it is so shocking; yet though sad, it is true. How comes **this plague of the agapetae** to be in the church? Whence come these unwedded wives, these novel concubines, **these harlots, so I will call them, though they cling to a**

single partner? One house holds them and one chamber. They often occupy the same bed, and yet they call us suspicious if we fancy anything amiss. **A brother leaves his virgin sister**; a virgin, slighting her unmarried brother, seeks a brother in a stranger. Both alike profess to have but one object, to find spiritual consolation from those not of their kin; but their real aim is to indulge in sexual intercourse. It is on such that Solomon in the book of Proverbs heaps his scorn. 'Can a man take fire in his bosom,' he says, 'and his clothes not be burned? Can one go upon hot coals and his feet not be burned?'

15 **We cast out, then, and banish** from our sight those who only wish to seem and not to be virgins. Henceforward I may bring all my speech to bear upon you who, as it is your lot to be the first virgin of noble birth in Rome, have to labour the more diligently not to lose good things to come, as well as those that are present. You have at least learned from a case in your own family the troubles of wedded life and the uncertainties of marriage. Your sister Blaesilla, before you in age but behind you in declining the vow of virginity, has become a widow seven months after she has taken a husband. Hapless plight of us mortals who know not what is before us! She has lost, at once, the crown of virginity and the pleasures of wedlock. And, although, as a widow, the second degree of chastity is hers, still can you not imagine the continual crosses which she has to bear, daily seeing in her sister what she has lost herself; and, while she finds it hard to go without the pleasures of wedlock, having a less reward for her present continence? Still she, too, may take heart and rejoice. The fruit which is a hundredfold and that which is sixtyfold both spring from one seed, and that seed is chastity.

16 Do not court the company of married ladies or visit the houses of the high-born. Do not look too often on the life which you despised to become a virgin. Women of the world, you know, plume themselves because their husbands are on the bench or in other high positions. And the wife of the emperor always has an eager throng of visitors at her door. Why do you, then, wrong your husband? Why do you, God's bride, hasten to visit the wife of a mere man? Learn in this respect a holy pride; know that you are better than they. And not only must you avoid intercourse with those who are puffed up by their husbands' honours, who are hedged in with troops of eunuchs, and who wear robes inwrought with threads of gold. You must also shun those who are widows from necessity and not from choice. Not that they ought to have desired the death of their husbands; but that they have not welcomed the opportunity of continence when it has come. As it is, they only change their garb; their old self-seeking remains unchanged. To see them in their **capacious litters**, with red cloaks and plump bodies, **a row of eunuchs** walking in front of them, you would fancy them not to have lost husbands but to be seeking them. Their houses are filled with flatterers and with guests. The very clergy, who ought to inspire them with respect by their teaching and authority, kiss these ladies on the forehead, and putting forth their hands (so that, if you knew no better, you might suppose them in

the act of blessing), take wages for their visits. They, meanwhile, seeing that priests cannot do without them, are lifted up into pride; and as, having had experience of both, they prefer the licence of widowhood to the restraints of marriage, **they call themselves chaste livers and nuns. After an immoderate supper** they retire to rest to dream of the apostles.

17 Let your companions be women pale and thin with fasting, and approved by their years and conduct; such as daily sing in their hearts: 'Tell me where thou feedest thy flock, where thou makest it to rest at noon,' and say, with true earnestness, 'I have a desire to depart and to be with Christ.' Be subject to your parents, imitating the example of your Spouse. Rarely go abroad, and if you wish to seek the aid of the martyrs seek it in your own chamber. For you will never need a pretext for going out if you always go out when there is need. Take food in moderation, and never overload your stomach. For many women, while temperate as regards wine, are intemperate in the use of food. When you rise at night to pray, let your breath be that of an empty and not that of an overfull stomach. Read often, learn all that you can. Let sleep overcome you, the roll still in your hands; when your head falls, let it be on the sacred page. Let your fasts be of daily occurrence and your refreshment such as avoids satiety. It is idle to carry an empty stomach if, in two or three days' time, the fast is to be made up for by repletion. When cloyed the mind immediately grows sluggish, and when the ground is watered it puts forth the thorns of lust. If ever you feel the outward man sighing for the flower of youth, and if, as you lie on your couch after a meal, you are excited by **the alluring train of sensual desires**; then seize the shield of faith, for it alone can quench the fiery darts of the devil. 'they are **all adulterers**,' says the prophet; 'they have made ready their heart like an oven.' But do you keep close to the footsteps of Christ, and, intent upon his words, say: 'Did not our heart burn within us by the way while Jesus opened to us the Scriptures?' and again: 'Thy word is tried to the uttermost, and thy servant loveth it.' It is hard for the human soul to avoid loving something, and our mind must of necessity give way to affection of one kind or another. The love of the flesh is overcome by the love of the spirit. Desire is quenched by desire. What is taken from the one increases the other. Therefore, as you lie on your couch, say again and again: 'By night have I sought him whom my soul loveth.' 'Mortify, therefore,' says the Apostle, 'your members which are upon the earth.' Because he himself did so, he could afterwards say with confidence: 'I live, yet not I, but Christ, liveth in me.' He who mortifies his members, and feels that **he is walking in a vain show**, is not afraid to say: 'I am become like a bottle in the frost. Whatever there was in me of the moisture of lust has been dried out of me.' And again: 'My knees are weak through fasting; I forget to eat my bread. By reason of the voice of my groaning my bones cleave to my skin.'

18 **Be like the grasshopper and make night musical**. Nightly wash your bed and water your couch with your tears. Watch and be like the sparrow alone upon the housetop. Sing with the spirit, but sing with the understanding also. And let your

song be that of the psalmist: 'Bless the Lord, O my soul; and forget not all his benefits; who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction.' Can we, any of us, honestly make his words our own: 'I have eaten ashes like bread and mingled my drink with weeping?' Yet, should we not weep and groan when the serpent invites us, as he invited our first parents, to eat forbidden fruit, and when after expelling us from the paradise of virginity he desires to clothe us with mantles of skins such as that which Elijah, on his return to paradise, left behind him on earth? Say to yourself: 'What have I to do with the pleasures of sense that so soon come to an end? What have I to do with the song of the sirens so sweet and so fatal to those who hear it?' I would not have you subject to that sentence whereby condemnation has been passed upon mankind. When God says to Eve, 'In pain and in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children,' say to yourself, **'That is a law for a married woman, not for me.'** And when he continues, 'Thy desire shall be to thy husband,' say again, 'Let her desire be to her husband who has not Christ for her spouse.' And when, last of all, he says, 'Thou shalt surely die,' once more, say, 'Marriage indeed must end in death; but the life on which I have resolved is independent of sex. Let those who are wives keep the place and the time that properly belong to them. For me, virginity is consecrated in the persons of Mary and of Christ.'

19 Someone may say, 'Do you dare detract from wedlock, which is a state blessed by God?' I do not detract from wedlock when I set virginity before it. No one compares a bad thing with a good. Wedded women may congratulate themselves that they come next to virgins. 'Be fruitful,' God says, 'and multiply, and replenish the earth.' He who desires to replenish the earth may increase and multiply if he will. But the train to which you belong is not on earth, but in heaven. The command to increase and multiply first finds fulfilment after the expulsion from paradise, after the nakedness and the fig-leaves, which speak of sexual passion. Let them marry and be given in marriage who eat their bread in the sweat of their brow; whose land brings forth to them thorns and thistles, and whose crops are choked with briars. My seed produces fruit a hundredfold. 'All men cannot receive God's saying, but they to whom it is given.'

Some people may be eunuchs from necessity; I am one of free will. 'There is a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing. There is a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together.' Now that **out of the hard stones of the Gentiles** God has raised up children unto Abraham, they begin to be 'holy stones rolling upon the earth.' **They pass through the whirlwinds of the world**, and roll on in God's chariot on rapid wheels. **Let those stitch coats** to themselves who have lost the coat woven from the top throughout; who delight in the cries of infants which, as soon as they see the light, **lament that they are born**. In paradise Eve was a virgin, and it was only after the coats of skins that she began her married life. Now paradise is your home too. Keep therefore your birthright and say: 'Return unto thy rest,

O my soul.' To show that virginity is natural while wedlock only follows guilt, what is born of wedlock is virgin flesh, and it gives back in fruit what in root it has lost. 'There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a flower shall grow out of his roots.' The rod is the mother of the Lord – simple, pure, unsullied; drawing no germ of life from without but **fruitful in singleness like God himself**. The flower of the rod is Christ, who says of himself: 'I am the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valleys.' In another place he is foretold to be 'a stone cut out of the mountain without hands,' a figure by which the prophet signifies that he is to be born a virgin of a virgin. For the hands are here a figure of wedlock, as in the passage 'His left hand is under my head and his right hand doth embrace me.' It agrees, also, with this interpretation that the unclean animals are led into Noah's ark in pairs, while of the clean an uneven number is taken. Similarly, when Moses and Joshua were bidden to remove their shoes because the ground on which they stood was holy, the command had a mystical meaning. So, too, when the disciples were appointed to preach the gospel they were told to take with them neither shoe nor shoe-latchet, and when the soldiers came to cast lots for the garments of Jesus they found no boots that they could take away. For the Lord could not himself possess **what he had forbidden** to his servants.

20 I praise wedlock, I praise marriage, but it is because they give me virgins. I gather the rose from the thorns, the gold from the earth, the pearl from the shell. '**Doth the ploughman plough all day to sow?**' Shall he not also enjoy the fruit of his labour? Wedlock is the more honoured, the more what is born of it is loved. Why, mother, do you grudge your daughter her virginity? She has been reared on your milk, she has come from your womb, she has grown up in your bosom. Your watchful affection has kept her a virgin. Are you angry with her because she chooses to be a king's wife and not a soldier's? She has conferred on you a high privilege; you are now the mother-in-law of God. 'Concerning virgins,' says the Apostle, 'I have no commandment of the Lord.' Why was this? Because his own virginity was due, not to a command, but to his free choice. **For they are not to be heard** who feign him to have had a wife; for, when he is discussing continence and commending perpetual chastity he uses the words 'I would that all men were even as I myself.' And farther on, 'I say, therefore, to the unmarried and widows, it is good for them if they abide even as I.' And in another place, 'Have we no power to lead about wives even as the rest of the apostles?' Why then has he no commandment from the Lord concerning virginity? Because what is freely offered is worth more than what is extorted by force, and to command virginity would have been to abrogate wedlock. It would have been a hard enactment to compel opposition to nature and to extort from men the angelic life; and not only so, it would have been to condemn what is a divine ordinance.

21 The old law had a different ideal of blessedness, for therein it is said: 'Blessed is he who hath seed in Zion and a family in Jerusalem' and 'Cursed is the barren who beareth not' and 'Thy children shall be like **olive-plants** round thy table.' Riches too

are promised to the faithful, and we are told that 'there was not one feeble person among their tribes.' But now even to eunuchs it is said, 'Say not, behold I am a dry tree,' for instead of sons and daughters you have a place forever in heaven. Now the poor are blessed, now Lazarus is set before Dives in his purple. Now he who is weak is counted strong. But in those days the world was still unpeopled: accordingly, **to pass over instances of childlessness** meant only to serve as types, those only were considered happy who could boast of children. It was for this reason that Abraham in his old age married Keturah; that Leah hired Jacob with her son's mandrakes, and that fair Rachel – a type of the church – complained of the closing of her womb. But gradually the crop grew up and then the reaper was sent forth with his sickle. Elijah lived a virgin life, so also did Elisha and many of the sons of the prophets. To Jeremiah the command came: 'Thou shalt not take thee a wife.' He had been sanctified in his mother's womb, and now he was forbidden to take a wife because the captivity was near. The Apostle gives the same counsel in different words. 'I think, therefore, that this is good by reason of the present distress, namely that it is good for a man to be as he is.' What is this distress which does away with the joys of wedlock? The Apostle tells us, in a later verse: 'The time is short: it remaineth that those who have wives be as though they had none.' Nebuchadnezzar is hard at hand. The lion is bestirring himself from his lair. What good will marriage be to me if it is to end in slavery to the haughtiest of kings? What good will little ones be to me if their lot is to be that which the prophet sadly describes: 'The tongue of the sucking child cleaveth to the roof of his mouth for thirst; the young children ask for bread and no man breaketh it unto them'? In those days, as I have said, the virtue of continence was found only in men: Eve still continued to travail with children. But now that a virgin has conceived in the womb and has borne to us a child of whom the prophet says that 'government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called the mighty God, the everlasting Father,' now the chain of the curse is broken. Death came through Eve, but life has come through Mary. And thus the gift of virginity has been bestowed most richly upon women, seeing that it has had its beginning from a woman. As soon as the Son of God set foot upon the earth, he formed for himself a new household there; that, as he was adored by angels in heaven, angels might serve him also on earth. Then chaste Judith once more cut off the head of Holofernes. Then Haman – whose name means iniquity – was once more burned in the fire of his own kindling. Then James and John forsook father and net and ship and followed the Saviour: neither kinship nor the world's ties nor the care of their home could hold them back. Then were the words heard: 'Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.' For no soldier goes with a wife to battle. Even when a disciple would have buried his father, the Lord forbade him, and said: 'Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head.' So you must not complain if you have but scanty house-room. In the same strain, the Apostle writes: 'He that is unmarried careth for

the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: but he that is married careth for the things that are of this world how he may please his wife. **There is a difference also between a wife and a virgin**. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord that she may be holy both in body and in spirit. But she that is married careth for the things of the world how she may please her husband.'

22 How great inconveniences are involved in wedlock and how many anxieties encompass it I have, I think, described shortly in my treatise – published against Helvidius – on the perpetual virginity of the blessed Mary. It would be tedious to go over the same ground now; and any one who pleases may draw from that fountain. But lest I should seem wholly to have passed over the matter, I will just say now that the Apostle bids us pray without ceasing, and that he who in the married state renders his wife her due cannot so pray. Either we pray always and are virgins, or we cease to pray that we may fulfil the claims of marriage. Still he says: 'If a virgin marry she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh.' At the outset I promised that I should say little or nothing of the embarrassments of wedlock, and now I give you notice to the same effect. If you want to know from how many vexations a virgin is free and by how many a wife is fettered you should read Tertullian 'to a philosophic friend' and his other treatises on virginity, the blessed Cyprian's noble volume, the writings of Pope Damasus in prose and verse, and the treatises recently written for his sister by **our own Ambrose**. In these he has poured forth his soul with such a flood of eloquence that he has sought out, set forth, and put in order all that bears on the praise of virgins.

23 We must proceed by a different path, for our purpose is not the praise of virginity but its preservation. To know that it is a good thing is not enough; when we have chosen it we must guard it with jealous care. The first only requires judgment, and we share it with many; the second calls for toil, and few compete with us in it. 'He that shall endure unto the end,' the Lord says, 'the same shall be saved,' and 'many are called but few are chosen.' Therefore I conjure you before God and Jesus Christ and his elect angels to guard that which you have received, not readily exposing to the public gaze the vessels of the Lord's temple (which only the priests are by right allowed to see), that no profane person may look upon God's sanctuary. Uzzah, when he touched the ark which it was not lawful to touch, was struck down suddenly by death. And assuredly no gold or silver vessel was ever so dear to God as is the temple of a virgin's body. The shadow went before, but now the reality is come. You indeed may speak in all simplicity, and from motives of amiability may treat with courtesy the veriest of strangers, but unchaste eyes see nothing aright. They fail to appreciate the beauty of the soul, and only value that of the body. Hezekiah showed God's treasure to the Assyrians, who ought never to have seen what they were sure to covet. The consequence was that Judaea was torn by continual wars, and that the very first things carried away to Babylon were these vessels of the Lord. We find Belshazzar at his feast and among his concubines (vice always glories in defiling what is noble) drinking out of these sacred cups.

24 Never incline your ear to the words of mischief. For men often say an improper word to make trial of a virgin's steadfastness, to see if she hears it with pleasure, and if she is ready to unbend at every silly jest. Such persons applaud whatever you affirm and deny whatever you deny; they speak of you as not only holy but accomplished, and say that in you there is no guile. 'Behold,' say they, 'a true handmaid of Christ; behold entire singleness of heart. How different from that rough, unsightly, countrified fright, who most likely never married because she could never find a husband.' Our natural weakness induces us readily to listen to such flatterers; but, though we may blush and reply that such praise is more than our due, the soul within us rejoices to hear itself praised.

Like the ark of the covenant Christ's spouse should be overlaid with gold within and without; she should be the guardian of the law of the Lord. Just as the ark contained nothing but the tables of the covenant, so in you there should be no thought of anything that is outside. For it pleases the Lord to sit in your mind as he once sat on the mercy-seat and the cherubims. As he sent his disciples to loose him the foal of an ass that he might ride on it, so he sends them to release you from the cares of the world, that leaving the bricks and straw of Egypt, you may follow him, the true Moses, through the wilderness and may enter the land of promise. Let no one dare to forbid you, neither mother nor sister nor kinswoman nor brother: 'The Lord hath need of you.' Should they seek to hinder you, let them fear the scourges that fell on Pharaoh, who, because he would not let God's people go that they might serve him, suffered the plagues described in Scripture. Jesus entering into the temple cast out those things which belonged not to the temple. For God is jealous and will not allow the father's house to be made a den of robbers. Where money is counted, where doves are sold, where simplicity is stifled, where, that is, a virgin's breast glows with cares of this world; straightway the veil of the temple is rent, the Bridegroom rises in anger, he says: 'Your house is left unto you desolate.' Read the gospel and see how Mary sitting at the feet of the Lord is set before the zealous Martha. In her anxiety to be hospitable Martha was preparing a meal for the Lord and his disciples; yet Jesus said to her: 'Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things. But few things are needful or one. And Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her.' Be then like Mary; prefer the food of the soul to that of the body. Leave it to your sisters to run to and fro and to seek how they may fitly welcome Christ. But do you, having once for all cast away the burden of the world, sit at the Lord's feet and say: 'I have found him whom my soul loveth; I will hold him, I will not let him go.' And he will answer: 'My dove, my undefiled is but one; she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bare her.' Now the mother of whom this is said is the heavenly Jerusalem.

25 Ever let the privacy of your chamber guard you; ever let the Bridegroom sport with you within. Do you pray? You speak to the Bridegroom. Do you read? He speaks to you. When sleep overtakes you he will come behind and put his hand through the hole of the door, and your heart shall be moved for him; and you will

awake and rise up and say: 'I am sick of love.' Then he will reply: 'A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed.'

Go not from home nor visit the daughters of a strange land, though you have patriarchs for brothers and Israel for a father. Dinah went out and was seduced. Do not seek the Bridegroom in the streets; do not go round the corners of the city. For though you may say: 'I will rise now and go about the city: in the streets and in the broad ways will I seek him whom my soul loveth,' and though you may ask the watchmen: 'Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?' no one will deign to answer you. The Bridegroom cannot be found in the streets: 'Strait and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life.' So the Song goes on: 'I sought him but I could not find him: I called him but he gave me no answer.' And would that failure to find him were all. You will be wounded and stripped, you will lament and say: 'The watchmen that went about the city found me: they smote me, they wounded me, they took away **my veil** from me.' Now if one who could say: 'I sleep but my heart waketh,' and 'A bundle of myrrh is my well-beloved unto me; he shall lie all night betwixt my breasts'; if one who could speak thus suffered so much because she went abroad, what shall become of us who are but young girls; of us who, when the bride goes in with the Bridegroom, still remain without? Jesus is jealous. He does not choose that your face should be seen by others. You may excuse yourself and say: 'I have drawn close my veil, I have covered my face and I have sought thee there and have said: "Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest thy flock, where thou makest it to rest at noon. For why should I be as one that is veiled beside the flocks of thy companions?" ' Yet in spite of your excuses he will be wroth, he will swell with anger and say: 'If thou know not thyself, O thou fairest among women, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock and feed thy goats beside the shepherd's tents.' You may be fair, and of all faces yours may be the dearest to the Bridegroom; yet, unless you know yourself, and keep your heart with all diligence, unless also you avoid the eyes of young men, you will be turned out of my bride-chamber to feed the goats, which shall be set on the left hand.

26 These things being so, my Eustochium, daughter, lady, fellow servant, sister – these names refer the first to your age, the second to your rank, the third to your religious vocation, the last to the place that you hold in my affection – hear the words of Isaiah: '**Come, my people, enter** thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation' of the Lord 'be overpast.' Let foolish virgins stray abroad, but for your part stay at home with the Bridegroom; for if you shut your door, and, according to the precept of the gospel, pray to your Father in secret, he will come and knock, saying: 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man ... open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.' Then straightway you will eagerly reply: 'It is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled.' It is impossible that you should refuse, and say: 'I have put off my coat;

how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?' Arise forthwith and open. Otherwise while you linger he may pass on and you may have mournfully to say: 'I opened to my beloved, but my beloved was gone.' Why need the doors of your heart be closed to the Bridegroom? Let them be open to Christ but closed to the devil according to the saying: 'If the spirit of him who hath power rise up against thee, leave not thy place.' **Daniel, in that upper story** to which he withdrew when he could no longer continue below, had his windows open towards Jerusalem. Do you too keep your windows open, but only on the side where light may enter and whence you may see the eye of the Lord. Open not those other windows of which the prophet says: 'Death is come up into our windows.'

27 You must also be careful **to avoid the snare of a passion for vainglory**. 'How,' Jesus says, 'can ye believe which receive glory from one another?' What an evil that must be the victim of which cannot believe! Let us rather say: 'Thou art my glorying,' and 'He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord,' and 'If I yet pleased men I should not be the servant of Christ,' and 'Far be it from me to glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the world hath been crucified unto me and I unto the world;' and once more: 'In God we boast all the day long; my soul shall make her boast in the Lord.' When you do alms, let God alone see you. When you fast, be of a cheerful countenance. Let your dress be neither too neat nor too slovenly; neither let it be so remarkable as to draw the attention of passers-by and **to make men point their fingers at you**. Is a brother dead? Has the body of a sister to be carried to its burial? Take care lest in too often performing such offices you die yourself. Do not wish to seem very devout or more humble than need be, lest you seek glory by shunning it. For many, who screen from all men's sight their poverty, charity, and fasting, desire to excite admiration by their very disdain of it, and strangely to seek for praise while they profess to keep out of its way. From the other disturbing influences which make men rejoice, despond, hope, and fear I find many free; but this is a defect which few are without, and he is best whose character, like a fair skin, is disfigured by the fewest blemishes. I do not think it necessary to warn you against boasting of your riches, or against priding yourself on your birth, or against setting yourself up as superior to others. I know your humility; I know that you can say with sincerity: 'Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty;' I know that in your breast as in that of your mother the pride through which the devil fell has no place. It would be time wasted to write to you about it; for there is no greater folly than to teach a pupil what he knows already. But now that you have despised the boastfulness of the world, do not let the fact inspire you with new boastfulness. Harbour not the secret thought that having ceased to court attention in garments of gold you may begin to do so in mean attire. And when you come into a room full of brothers and sisters, do not sit in too low a place or plead that you are unworthy of a footstool. Do not deliberately lower your voice as though worn out with fasting or, leaning on the shoulder of another, mimic the tottering gait of one who is faint. Some

women, it is true, disfigure their faces that they may appear unto men to fast. As soon as they catch sight of anyone they groan, they look down, they cover up their faces, all but one eye, which they keep free to see with. Their dress is sombre, their girdles are of sackcloth, their hands and feet are dirty; only their stomachs – which cannot be seen – are hot with food. Of these the psalm is sung daily: 'The Lord will scatter the bones of them that please themselves.' Others change their garb and assume the mien of men, being ashamed of being what they were born to be – women. They cut off their hair and are not ashamed **to look like eunuchs**. Some clothe themselves in goat's hair, and, putting on hoods, think to become children again by making themselves look like so many owls.

28 But I will not speak only of women. Avoid men, also, when **you see them loaded with chains**, and wearing their hair long like women, **contrary to the Apostle's precept**, not to speak of beards like those of goats, black cloaks, and **bare feet braving the cold**. All these things are tokens of the devil. **Such a one Rome groaned over some time back in Antimus**, and Sophronius is a still more recent instance. Such persons, when they have once gained admission to the houses of the high-born, and have deceived 'silly women laden with sins, ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth,' feign a sad mien and pretend to make long fasts while at night they feast in secret. Shame forbids me to say more, for my language might appear more like invective than admonition. There are others – I speak of those of my own order – who seek the presbyterate and the diaconate simply that they may be able to see women with less restraint. Such men think of nothing but their dress; they use perfumes freely, and see that there are no creases in their leather shoes. Their curling hair shows **traces of the tongs**; their fingers glisten with rings; they walk on tiptoe across a damp road, not to splash their feet. When you see men acting in this way, think of them rather as bridegrooms than as clergymen. Certain persons have devoted the whole of their energies and life to the single object of knowing the names, houses, and characters of married ladies. I will here briefly describe the head of the profession, that from the master's likeness you may recognize the disciples. He rises and goes forth with the sun; he has the order of his visits duly arranged; he takes the shortest road; and, troublesome old man that he is, forces his way almost into the bedchambers of ladies yet asleep. If he sees a pillow that takes his fancy or an elegant table-cover – or indeed any article of household furniture – he praises it, looks admiringly at it, takes it into his hand, and, complaining that he has nothing of the kind, begs or rather extorts it from the owner. All the women, in fact, fear to cross the news-carrier of the town. Chastity and fasting are alike distasteful to him. What he likes is a savoury breakfast – say off **a plump young crane** such as is commonly called a cheeper. In speech he is rude and forward, and is always ready to bandy reproaches. Wherever you turn he is the first man that you see before you. Whatever news is noised abroad he is either the originator of the rumour or its magnifier. He changes his horses every hour; and they are so sleek and spirited that you would take him for **a brother of the Thracian king**.

29 Many are the stratagems which the wily enemy employs against us. 'The serpent,' we are told, 'was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made.' And the Apostle says: 'We are not ignorant of his devices.' Neither an affected shabbiness nor a stylish smartness becomes a Christian. If there is anything of which you are ignorant, if you have any doubt about Scripture, ask one whose life commends him, whose age puts him above suspicion, whose reputation does not belie him; one who may be able to say: 'I have espoused you to one husband that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.' Or if there should be none such able to explain, it is better to avoid danger at the price of ignorance than to court it for the sake of learning. Remember that you walk in the midst of snares, and that many veteran virgins, of a chastity never called into question, have, on the very threshold of death, let their crowns fall from their hands.

If any of your handmaids share your vocation, do not lift yourself against them or pride yourself because you are their mistress. You have all chosen one Bridegroom; you all sing the same psalms; together you receive the body of Christ. Why then should your thoughts be different? You must try to win others, and that you may attract the more readily you must treat the virgins in your train with the greatest respect. If you find one of them weak in the faith, be attentive to her, comfort her, caress her, and make her chastity your treasure. But if a girl pretends to have a vocation simply because she desires to escape from service, read aloud to her the words of the Apostle: 'It is better to marry than to burn.'

Idle persons and busybodies, whether virgins or widows, such as go from house to house calling on married women and displaying **an unblushing effrontery** greater than that of **a stage parasite**, cast from you as you would the plague. For 'evil communications corrupt good manners,' and women like these care for nothing but their lowest appetites. They will often urge you, saying, '**My dear puppy**, make the best of your advantages, and live while life is yours,' and 'Surely you are not laying up money for your children.' Given to wine and wantonness, they instill all manner of mischief into people's minds, and induce even the most austere to indulge in enervating pleasures. And 'when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ they will marry, having condemnation because they have rejected their first faith.'

Do not seek to appear over-eloquent, or trifle with verse, or make yourself gay with lyric songs. And do not, out of affectation, follow **the sickly taste of married ladies** who, now pressing their teeth together, now keeping their lips wide apart, speak with a lisp, and purposely clip their words, because they fancy that **to pronounce them naturally** is a mark of country breeding. Accordingly they find pleasure in what I may call an adultery of the tongue. For 'what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial?' How can Horace go with the Psalter, Virgil with the Gospels, Cicero with the Apostle? Is not a brother made to stumble if he sees you sitting at meat in an idol's temple? Although 'unto the pure all things are pure,' and 'nothing is to be refused if it be received with thanksgiving,' still we ought not to drink the cup of Christ, and, at

the same time, the cup of devils. Let me relate to you the story of my own miserable experience.

30 **Many years ago**, when for the kingdom of heaven's sake I had cut myself off from home, parents, sister, relations, and – harder still – from the dainty food to which I had been accustomed; and when I was on my way to Jerusalem to wage my warfare, I still could not bring myself to forego the library which I had formed for myself at Rome with great care and toil. And so, miserable man that I was, I would fast only that I might afterwards read Cicero. After many nights spent in vigil, after floods of tears called from my inmost heart, after the recollection of my past sins, I would once more take up Plautus. And when at times I returned to my right mind, and began to read the prophets, their style seemed rude and repellent. I failed to see the light with my blinded eyes; but I attributed the fault not to them, but to the sun. While the old serpent was thus making me his plaything, about the middle of Lent a deep-seated fever fell upon my weakened body, and while it destroyed my rest completely – the story seems hardly credible – it so wasted my unhappy frame that scarcely anything was left of me but skin and bone. Meantime preparations for my funeral went on; my body grew gradually colder, and the warmth of life lingered only in my throbbing breast. Suddenly I was caught up in the spirit and dragged before the judgment-seat of the Judge; and here the light was so bright, and those who stood around were so radiant, that I cast myself upon the ground and did not dare to look up. Asked who and what I was I replied: 'I am a Christian.' But he who presided said: 'Thou liest, thou art a follower of Cicero and not of Christ. For "where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also."' Instantly I became dumb, and amid the strokes of the lash – for he had ordered me to be scourged – I was tortured more severely still by the fire of conscience, considering with myself that verse, 'In the grave who shall give thee thanks?' Yet for all that I began to cry and to bewail myself, saying: 'Have mercy upon me, O Lord: have mercy upon me.' Amid the sound of the scourges this cry still made itself heard. At last the bystanders, falling down before the knees of him who presided, prayed that he would have pity on my youth, and that he would give me space to repent of my error. He might still, they urged, inflict torture on me, should I ever again read the works of the Gentiles. Under the stress of that awful moment I should have been ready to make even still larger promises than these. Accordingly I made oath and called upon his name, saying: 'Lord, if ever again I possess worldly books, or if ever again I read such, I have denied thee.' Dismissed, then, on taking this oath, I returned to the upper world, and, to the surprise of all, I opened upon them eyes so drenched with tears that my distress served to convince even the incredulous. And that this was no sleep or idle dream, such as those by which we are often mocked, I call to witness the tribunal before which I lay, and the terrible judgment which I feared. May it never, hereafter, be my lot **to fall under such an inquisition**! I profess that my shoulders were black and blue, that I felt the bruises long after I awoke from my sleep, and that thenceforth I read the books of God with a zeal greater than I had previously given to the books of men.

31 You must also avoid the sin of covetousness, and this not merely by refusing to seize upon what belongs to others, for that is punished by the laws of the state, but also by not keeping your own property, which has now become no longer yours. 'If ye have not been faithful,' the Lord says, 'in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?' 'That which is another man's' is a quantity of gold or of silver, while 'that which is our own' is the spiritual heritage of which it is elsewhere said: 'The ransom of a man's life is his riches.' 'No man can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.' Riches, that is; for in the heathen tongue of the Syrians, riches are called mammon. The 'thorns' which choke our faith are the taking thought for our life. Care for the things which the Gentiles seek after is the root of covetousness.

But you will say: 'I am a girl delicately reared, and I cannot labour with my hands. Suppose that I live to old age and then fall sick, who will take pity on me?' Hear Jesus speaking to the apostles: 'Take no thought what ye shall eat; nor yet for your body what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body more than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them.' Should clothing fail you, set the lilies before your eyes. Should hunger seize you, think of the words in which the poor and hungry are blessed. Should pain afflict you, read 'Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities,' and 'There was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.' Rejoice in all God's judgments; for does not the psalmist say: 'The daughters of Judah rejoiced because of thy judgments, O Lord'? Let the words be ever on your lips: 'Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither;' and 'We brought nothing into this world and it is certain we can carry nothing out.'

32 Today you may see women cramming their wardrobes with dresses, changing their gowns from day to day, and for all that unable to vanquish the moths. Now and then one more scrupulous wears out a single dress; yet, while **she appears in rags**, her boxes are full. Parchments are dyed purple, gold is melted into lettering, manuscripts are decked with jewels, while Christ lies at the door naked and dying. When they hold out a hand to the needy they sound a trumpet; when they invite **to a love-feast** they engage a crier. I lately saw the noblest lady in Rome – I suppress her name, for I am no satirist – with a band of eunuchs before her in the basilica of the blessed Peter. She was giving money to the poor, a coin apiece; and this with her own hand, that she might be accounted more religious. Hereupon a by no means uncommon incident occurred. An old woman, 'full of years and rags,' ran forward to get a second coin, but when her turn came she received not a penny but a blow hard enough to draw blood from her guilty veins.

'The love of money is the root of all evil,' and the Apostle speaks of covetousness as being idolatry. 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God and all these things shall be added unto you.' The Lord will never allow a righteous soul to perish

of hunger. 'I have been young,' the psalmist says, 'and now am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken nor his seed begging bread.' Elijah is fed by ministering ravens. The widow of Zarephath, who with her sons expected to die the same night, went without food herself that she might feed the prophet. He who had come to be fed then turned feeder, for, by a miracle, he filled the empty barrel. The apostle Peter says: 'Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I thee. In the name of Jesus Christ rise up and walk.' But now many, while they do not say it in words, by their deeds declare: 'Faith and pity have I none; but such as I have, silver and gold, these I will not give thee.' 'Having food and raiment let us be therewith content.' Hear the prayer of Jacob: 'If God will be with me and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, then shall the Lord be my God.' He prayed only for things necessary; yet, twenty years afterwards, he returned to the land of Canaan rich in substance and richer still in children. Numberless are the instances in Scripture which teach men to 'beware of covetousness.'

33 As I have been led to touch on the subject – it shall have a treatise to itself if Christ permit – I will relate what took place not very many years ago at Nitria. A brother, more thrifty than covetous, and ignorant that the Lord had been sold for thirty pieces of silver, left behind him at his death a hundred pieces of money which he had earned by weaving linen. As there were about five thousand monks in the neighbourhood, living in as many separate cells, a council was held as to what should be done. Some said that the coins should be distributed among the poor; others that they should be given to the church, while others were for sending them back to the relatives of the deceased. However, Macarius, Pambo, Isidore and the rest of those called fathers, speaking by the Spirit, decided that they should be interred with their owner, with the words: 'Thy money perish with thee.' Nor was this too harsh a decision; for so great fear has fallen upon all throughout Egypt, that it is now a crime to leave after one a single shilling.

34 As I have mentioned the monks, and know that you like to hear about holy things, lend an ear to me for a few moments. There are in Egypt three classes of monks. First, there are the **coenobites**, called in their Gentile language Sauses, or, as we should say, men living in a community. Secondly, there are the **anchorites**, who live in the desert, each man by himself, and are so called because they have withdrawn from human society. Thirdly, there is the class called Remoboth, a very inferior and little-regarded type, peculiar to my own province, or, at least, originating there. These live together in twos and threes, but seldom in larger numbers, and are bound by no rule, but do exactly as they choose. A portion of their earnings they contribute to a common fund, out of which food is provided for all. In most cases they reside in cities and strongholds; and, as though it were their workmanship which is holy, and not their life, all that they sell is extremely dear. They often quarrel because they are unwilling, while supplying their own food, to be subordinate to others. It is true that they compete with each other in fasting; they

make what should be a private concern an occasion for a triumph. In everything they study effect: their sleeves are loose, their boots bulge, their garb is of the coarsest. They are always sighing, or visiting virgins, or sneering at the clergy; yet when a holiday comes, they make themselves sick – they eat so much.

35 Having then rid ourselves of these as of so many plagues, let us come to that more numerous class who live together, and who are, as we have said, called coenobites. Among these the first principle of union is to obey superiors and to do whatever they command. They are divided into bodies of ten and of a hundred, so that each tenth man has authority over nine others, while the hundredth has ten of these officers under him. They live apart from each other, in separate cells. According to their rule, no monk may visit another before the ninth hour; except the deans above mentioned, whose office is to comfort, with soothing words, those whose thoughts disquiet them. After the ninth hour they meet together to sing psalms and read the Scriptures according to usage. Then when the prayers have ended and all have sat down, one called the father stands up among them and begins to expound the portion of the day. While he is speaking the silence is profound; no man ventures to look at his neighbour or to clear his throat. The speaker's praise is in the weeping of his hearers. Silent tears roll down their cheeks, but not a sob escapes from their lips. Yet when he begins to speak of Christ's kingdom, and of future bliss, and of the glory which is to come, every one may be noticed saying to himself, with a gentle sign and uplifted eyes: 'Oh, that I had wings like a dove! For then would I fly away and be at rest.' After this the meeting breaks up and each company of ten goes with its father to its own table. This they take in turns to serve, each for a week at a time. No noise is made over the food; no one talks while eating. Bread, pulse, and greens form the fare, and the only seasoning that they use is salt. Wine is given only to the old, who with the children often have a special meal prepared for them to repair the ravages of age and to save the young from premature decay. When the meal is over they all rise together, and, after singing a hymn, return to their dwellings. There each one talks till evening with his comrade thus: 'Have you noticed so-and-so? What grace he has! How silent he is! How soberly he walks!' If anyone is weak they comfort him; or if he is fervent in love to God, they encourage him to fresh earnestness. And because at night, besides the public prayers, each man keeps vigil in his own chamber, they go round all the cells one by one, and putting their ears to the doors, carefully ascertain what their occupants are doing. If they find a monk slothful, they do not scold him; but, dissembling what they know, they visit him more frequently, and at first exhort rather than compel him to pray more. Each day has its allotted task, and this being given in to the dean, is by him brought to the steward. This latter, once a month, gives a scrupulous account to their common father. He also tastes the dishes when they are cooked, and, as no one is allowed to say, 'I am without a tunic or a cloak or a couch of rushes,' he so arranges **that no one need ask for or go without what he wants.** In case a monk falls ill, he is moved to a more spacious chamber, and there so

attentively nursed by the old men that he misses neither the luxury of cities nor a mother's kindness. Every Lord's day they spend their whole time in prayer and reading; indeed, **when they have finished their tasks**, these are their usual occupations. Every day they learn by heart a portion of Scripture. They keep the same fasts all the year round, but in Lent they are allowed to live more strictly. **After Pentecost** they exchange their evening meal for a midday one; both to satisfy the tradition of the church and to avoid overloading their stomachs with a double supply of food.

A similar description is given of **the Essenes** by **Philo, Plato's imitator**; also by **Josephus, the Greek Livy**, in his narrative of the Jewish captivity.

36 As my present subject is virgins, I have said rather too much about monks. I will pass on, therefore, to the third class, called anchorites, who go from the monasteries into the deserts, with nothing but bread and salt. Paul introduced this way of life; Antony made it famous, and – to go farther back still – John the Baptist set the first example of it. The prophet Jeremiah describes one such in the words: 'It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. He sitteth alone and keepeth silence, because he hath borne it upon him. He giveth his cheek to him that smiteth him, he is filled full with reproach. For the Lord will not cast off forever.' The struggle of the anchorites and their life – in the flesh, yet not of the flesh – I will, if you wish, explain to you at some other time. I must now return to the subject of covetousness, which I left to speak of the monks. With them before your eyes you will despise, not only gold and silver in general, but earth itself and heaven. United to Christ, you will sing, 'The Lord is my portion.'

37 Further, although the Apostle bids us to 'pray without ceasing,' and although to the saints their very sleep is a supplication, we ought to have fixed hours of prayer, that if we are detained by work, the time may remind us of our duty. Prayers, as every one knows, ought to be said at the third, sixth, and ninth hours, at dawn and at evening. No meal should be begun without prayer, and before leaving table thanks should be returned to the creator. We should rise two or three times in the night and go over part of Scripture which we know by heart. When we leave the roof which shelters us, prayer should be our armour; and when we return from the street we should pray before we sit down, and not give the frail body rest until the soul is fed. In every act we do, in every step we take, let our hand trace the Lord's cross. Speak against nobody, and do not slander your mother's son. 'Who art thou that judgest the servant of another? To his own lord he standeth or falleth; yes, he shall be made to stand, for the Lord hath power to make him stand.' If you have fasted two or three days, do not think yourself better than others who do not fast. You fast and are angry; another eats and wears a smiling face. You work off your irritation and hunger in quarrels. He uses food in moderation and gives God thanks. Daily Isaiah cries: 'Is it such a fast that I have chosen, saith the Lord?' and again: 'In the day of your fast ye find your own pleasure, and oppress all your labourers. Behold, ye fast for strife and

contention, and to smite with the fist of wickedness. How fast ye unto me?' What kind of fast can his be whose wrath is such that not only does the night go down upon it, but that even the moon's changes leave it unchanged?

38 Look to yourself and glory in your own success and not in others' failure. Some women care for the flesh and reckon up their income and daily expenditure: such are no fit models for you. Judas was a traitor, but the eleven apostles did not waver. **Phygellus and Alexander** made shipwreck; but the rest continued to run the race of faith. Say not: 'So-and-so enjoys her own property, she is honoured of men, her brothers and sisters come to see her. Has she then ceased to be a virgin?' In the first place, it is doubtful if she is a virgin. For 'the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh upon the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.' Again, she may be a virgin in body and not in spirit. According to the Apostle, a true virgin is 'holy both in body and in spirit.' Lastly, let her glory in her own way. Let her override Paul's opinion and live in the enjoyment of her good things. But you and I must follow better examples.

Set before you the blessed Mary, whose surpassing purity made her meet to be the mother of the Lord. When the angel Gabriel came down to her, in the form of a man, and said: 'Hail, thou that art highly favoured; the Lord is with thee,' she was terror-stricken and unable to reply, for she had never been saluted by a man before. But, on learning who he was, she spoke, and one who had been afraid of a man **conversed fearlessly with an angel**. Now you, too, may be the Lord's mother. '**Take thee a great roll** and write in it with a man's pen Maher-shalal-hash-baz.' And when you have gone to the prophetess, and have conceived in the womb, and have brought forth a son, say: 'Lord, we have been with child by thy fear, we have been in pain, we have brought forth the spirit of thy salvation, which we have wrought upon the earth.' Then shall your Son reply: 'Behold my mother and my brethren.' And he whose name you have so recently inscribed upon the table of your heart, and have written with a pen upon its renewed surface – he, after he has recovered the spoil from the enemy, and has spoiled principalities and powers, nailing them to his cross – having been miraculously conceived, grows up to manhood; and, as he becomes older, regards you no longer as his mother, but as his bride. To be as the martyrs, or as the apostles, or as Christ, involves a hard struggle, but brings with it a great reward.

All such efforts are only of use when they are made within the church's pale; we must celebrate the passover in the one house, we must enter the ark with Noah, we must take refuge from the fall of Jericho with the justified harlot, Rahab. Such virgins as there are said to be among the heretics and among the followers of the infamous Manes must be considered, not virgins, but prostitutes. For if – as they allege – the devil is the author of the body, how can they honour that which is fashioned by their foe? No; it is because they know that the name virgin brings glory with it that they go about as wolves in sheep's clothing. As Antichrist pretends to be

Christ, such virgins assume an honourable name that they may the better cloak a discreditable life. Rejoice, my sister; rejoice, my daughter; rejoice, my virgin; for you have resolved to be, in reality, that which others insincerely feign.

39 The things that I have here set forth will seem hard to her who loves not Christ. But one who has come to regard all the splendour of the world as offscourings, and to hold all things under the sun as vain, that he may win Christ; one who has died with his Lord and risen again, and has crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts; he will boldly cry out: 'Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?' and again: 'I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord.'

For our salvation the Son of God is made the Son of man. Nine months he awaits his birth in the womb, undergoes the most revolting conditions, and comes forth covered with blood, to be swathed in rags and covered with caresses. He who shuts up the world in his fist is contained in the narrow limits of a manger. I say nothing of the thirty years during which he lives in obscurity, satisfied with the poverty of his parents. When he is scourged he holds his peace; when he is crucified, he prays for his crucifiers. 'What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me? I will take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord. Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.' The only fitting return that we can make to him is to give blood for blood; and, as we are redeemed by the blood of Christ, gladly to lay down our lives for our Redeemer. What saint has ever won his crown without first contending for it? Righteous Abel is murdered. Abraham is in danger of losing his wife. And, as I must not enlarge my book unduly, seek for yourself: you will find that all holy men have suffered adversity. Solomon alone lived in luxury, and perhaps it was for this reason that he fell. For 'whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.' Which is best – for a short time to do battle, to carry stakes for the palisades, to bear arms, to faint under heavy bucklers that ever afterwards we may rejoice as victors? or to become slaves forever, just because we cannot endure for a single hour?'

40 Love finds nothing hard; no task is difficult to the eager. Think of all that Jacob bore for Rachel, the wife who had been promised to him. 'Jacob,' the Scripture says, 'served seven years for Rachel. And they seemed unto him but a few days for the love he had to her.' Afterwards he himself tells us what he had to undergo. 'In the day the drought consumed me and the frost by night.' So we must love Christ and always seek his embraces. Then everything difficult will seem easy; all things long we shall account short; and smitten with his arrows, we shall say every moment: 'Woe is me that I have prolonged my pilgrimage.' For 'the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.' For 'tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope; and

hope maketh not ashamed.' When your lot seems hard to bear read Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians: 'In labours more abundant; in stripes above measure; in prisons more frequent; in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one; thrice was I beaten with rods; once was I stoned; thrice I suffered shipwreck; a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils of the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren, in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.' Which of us can claim the veriest fraction of the virtues here enumerated? Yet it was these which afterwards made him bold to say: 'I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day.'

But we, if our food is less appetizing than usual, get sullen, and fancy that we do God a favour by drinking watered wine. And if the water brought to us is a trifle too warm, we break the cup and overturn the table and scourge the servant in fault until blood comes. 'The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence and the violent take it by force.' Still, unless you use force you will never seize the kingdom of heaven. Unless you knock importunately you will never receive the sacramental bread. Is it not truly violence, think you, when the flesh desires to be as God and ascends to the place whence angels have fallen to judge angels?

41 Emerge, I pray you, for a while from your prison-house, and paint before your eyes the reward of your present toil, a reward which 'eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man.' What will be the glory of that day **when Mary, the mother of the Lord**, shall come to meet you, accompanied by her virgin choirs! When, the Red Sea past and Pharaoh drowned with his host, Miriam, Aaron's sister, her timbrel in her hand, shall chant to the answering women: 'Sing ye unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.' Then shall Thecla fly with joy to embrace you. Then shall your Spouse himself come forward and say: 'Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away, for lo! the winter is past, the rain is over and gone.' Then shall the angels say with wonder: 'Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun?' 'The daughters shall see you and bless you; yea, the queens shall proclaim and the concubines shall praise you.' And, after these, yet another company of chaste women will meet you. Sarah will come with the wedded; Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, with the widows. In the one band you will find your natural mother and in the other your spiritual. The one will rejoice in having borne, the other will exult in having taught you. Then truly will the Lord ride upon his ass, and thus enter the heavenly Jerusalem. Then the little ones (of whom, in Isaiah, the Saviour says: 'Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me') shall lift up palms of victory and shall sing with one voice: 'Hosanna in the highest, blessed is he that

cometh in the name of the Lord, hosanna in the highest.' Then shall the 'hundred and forty four thousand' hold their harps before the throne and before the elders and shall sing the new song. And no man shall have power to learn that song save those for whom it is appointed. 'These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.' As often as this life's idle show tries to charm you: as often as you see in the world some vain pomp, transport yourself in mind to paradise, essay to be now what you will be hereafter, and you will hear your Spouse say: 'Set me as a sunshade in thine heart and as a seal upon thine arm.' And then, strengthened in body as well as in mind, you, too, will cry aloud and say: 'Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it.'

Annotations

1 **'Look not behind thee,' he says** He alludes to the story of Lot's flight from Sodom.[5]

4 **for those who are without** Thus St Paul calls those who are strangers to the profession of Christ. 'For what have I to do to judge them also that are without?'[6]

'His food is of the choicest.' [Erasmus points out the metaphor in Habakkuk and Jerome's use of the word *esca* 'bait.'] In Habakkuk, chapter 1, the devil is compared to a fisherman who lures men with bait and lands them with a hook, as it were.[7] For *esca* 'bait' is the correct name for what is fixed to the end of a hook, whence there is also the verb *inescare* 'to lure with bait.'

and after devouring Judas For he had already made the pact to betray Christ. The words are Christ's to Peter in Luke, chapter 22.[8]

5 **Let us fear** This prophecy is in Amos, chapter 8: 'In that day shall the fair virgins faint.'[9] Further, the Greek word καλός means both good and fair.[10]

6 **'Come down and sit in the dust ...'** The words are from Isaiah, chapter 47.[11]

she ... shall be made naked, and her skirts Thus does God threaten in Jeremiah, chapter 13: 'Therefore will I make thee naked and discover thy skirts upon thy face, that thy shame may appear.'[12]

She ... shall open her feet to everyone that passeth by This passage is in Ezekiel, chapter 16.[13]

and shall be polluted to the crown of her head Thus Jeremiah, chapter 2: 'The children also of Memphis and Tahpanhes have ravished thee even to the crown of thy head.'[14]

and owls make their nest The passage is in Isaiah, chapter 34, although translators have differed about the names of the fabulous creatures.[15]

7 **before me**[16] This passage was corrupt in all the copies I have seen. Some had the reading – and these were indeed the older ones – 'before me when my flesh was as good as dead.' Some had 'before a man whose flesh was as good as dead.' Again others had 'before all food, the flesh being as good as dead.' Perhaps this passage should read: 'within me, my flesh being as good as dead.' Thus one may understand that lust lives only in the mind since it is dead in the flesh. Or perhaps 'before me' means before old age.

8 **for it made him the father of Moab** Namely, from incest. The passage is in Deuteronomy, chapter 23, where God forbids the Israelites from ever entering into a compact or making peace with the Moabites and Ammonites or allowing them to come into the congregation of the Lord because they did not meet the Israelites with bread and water as they came out of Egypt and because they hired Balaam against them to curse their people.[17]

9 **there was a cake** [For 'cake' Erasmus' Latin text reads *panis collyrida*, a term he discusses here.] The passage is in the first book of Kings, chapter 29.[18] Some codices had *collyra*, which is a kind of bread or cake and from which comes the diminutive *collyris*. Hence in Leviticus we read *collyrida*, which is roasted meal or a kind of bread made with oil.[19]

spiced wine He means wine sweetened with honey, once a favourite drink, or rather what the Greeks call *οἶνος ἀρωματίτης* and is commonly known as Hippocratic wine.

flesh basted into tenderness Basted meats are combined and blended so that they can also be supped and not seem to be meat.

sweetened the waters of Mara For Mara in Hebrew means bitterness. The passage is in Exodus 15.[20]

when men were sent The passage is in the second book of Kings, chapter 6.[21]

10 **divine answers** So called not because they are spoken to a questioner but because they are given directly as oracular responses

13 **stars over which the proud foe** For thus does he threaten in Isaiah, chapter 14: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God.'[22]

with tripping feet Thus he depicts the lascivious and effete gait of girls, which elsewhere he also calls tripping the feet.[23]

that they may insure barrenness Something seems to be missing [in the Latin text] in order for you to understand that their barrenness was not the result of nature but was induced by drugs to prevent conception when they fornicated.[24] Jerome does not yet call it birth, nor yet conception, for conception is ended by abortion, which he will soon discuss.

they wish to appear [Erasmus' text reads 'they wish to live,' and he writes:] Some manuscripts had 'to appear.'[25] Here however Jerome uses 'to live' in the sense of 'to live voluptuously,' as in Catullus' 'Let us live, my Lesbia.' Further, he said 'agreeably and entertainingly' because they are wont to call those women who lead a more austere life disagreeable and morose.

they call her 'wretch' or 'Manichaean' Wretch because of slovenliness, Manichaean because the Manichaeans, although they committed the basest crimes, nevertheless used neither meat nor eggs in their diet. They said that no dead body should be eaten because the divine substance had left it. They did not drink wine either, because they said it was the venom of the prince of darkness. Yet they partook of grapes, according to Augustine in the book addressed to Quodvultdeus.[26]

quite logically That is, suitably and deservedly. Jerome uses this adverb several times in this sense.[27]

Their robes have but a narrow purple stripe He paints a picture of a virgin given to pleasure and lacking in steadfastness, although some display chastity while others exhibit wantonness. A narrow purple stripe has little glitter, but a robe of dark hue more becomes a true virgin.

so as to leave the hair free Although a virgin ought to shave off her hair, this girl only binds it somewhat loosely. She does this however for the opportunity of showing off her tresses.

From their shoulders flutters the lilac mantle This passage also was most corrupt in all the manuscripts. Perhaps it should read: 'And from their shoulders flutters perchance a mantle.' For a mantle is a luxurious woman's cloak. Jerome said 'flutters perchance' because it was not held tight as with others but fluttered carelessly, more indicative of indifference than of virtue.[28]

cheap slippers A slipper was a dainty type of footwear. Virgins should go barefoot, but these ladies used slippers, except that they were of a somewhat cheaper kind.

tight-fitting sleeves In Virgil the Trojans are reproached for being soft because their tunics had sleeves.[29] This virgin was different only to the extent that her sleeves did not hang loose but were tight-fitting.

an easy gait For this was thought to be a mark of their virginity, although it was wanton. Notice, kind reader, Jerome painted this virgin in such a way that his picture of a virgin depended on features less than essential to the subject, such as cheap slippers and somewhat loosely bound tresses. But in those features closer to the heart of the matter, such as conversation, food, and gait, an unchaste spirit appeared.

a higher price in the market of perdition, merely because they are called virgins For the title virgin contributed to their profit, not to their virtue. And this reading recommends itself all the more because Jerome has written elsewhere along similar lines.[30] And some copies have this reading. The question is whether 'more greedily' should be read, meaning that these virgins may perish with greater profligacy or at least with greater lack of restraint.[31] For I do not favour 'more quickly,' which is found in most manuscripts, nor is 'more greedily' any more pleasing. As I have said, I especially favour 'a higher price.'

14 **this plague of the agapetae** Ἀγαπητή in Greek means beloved. Paul is fond of using this word.[32] Therefore those people wrongly use the word to cloak their base traffic.

these harlots, so I will call them, though they cling to a single partner [Jerome's expression here is *meretrices univirae*, and Erasmus explains:] *Univirae* in Greek is μονογάμοι.[33]

A brother leaves his virgin sister It is astonishing how those people who reject grammar as something trivial and insignificant and in their reliance on sophistical subtleties believe they are capable of anything turn everything upside down. This passage must be divided thus, not to rehearse the many ways in which it has been confused: 'A brother leaves his virgin sister, a virgin slights her unmarried brother and seeks a brother in a stranger.' And Sulpicius Severus expressly cites this passage.[34]

15 **We cast out, then, and banish** I would venture to swear that 'and banish' is spurious and that either it was added by some impudent person or Jerome wrote instead 'and hissed off the stage.' Each of these expressions has been carried over from the theatre, where a play the audience had not found to its liking was driven off the stage by hissing and stamping of feet.

16 **capacious litters** [The Latin in Jerome's text for this expression is *caveas basternarum*, and Erasmus gives an erroneous explanation which he will subsequently change.[35]] *Bastarnae* [*sic*] are birds once considered a delicacy like partridges. Even today they are held in high regard by the common people.

a row of eunuchs [Jerome uses the Latin word *semivir* 'half-man,' and Erasmus explains:] He means either eunuchs whose attendance women of rank found pleasing or unmanly servants made effeminate by soft living.

they call themselves chaste livers and nuns [Erasmus discusses the use and source of the word *nonnae* 'nuns.'] Nowadays monastic virgins are also called this. Apparently the Egyptians are the source of this word in common speech. For it happens with some frequency that

things take their name from the nation where they were especially common or where they had their origin. Egypt more than other regions had an abundance of monastic communities. In its language, I think, monks and holy men were called *nonni* and women religious and virgins were called *nonnae*. For the *Suidas* makes mention of a certain Egyptian *nonnus* who translated into verse the theologian Parthenus.[36] And *parthenos* means virgin in Greek. It is as if a virgin wrote about a virgin. Finally in this same letter a little later when he discusses the different classes of monks he uses Egyptian terms.[37]

After an immoderate supper He has repeated the words of Terence from *Phormio: coena dubia apponitur* 'a puzzling dinner is served.' Terence calls what is sumptuous puzzling, 'where you'd be puzzled what dish to try first.'[38]

17 **the alluring train of sensual desires** Things pleasing to the sight are carried about in a 'train.' And 'sensual desires' have their 'train' when they display the special privileges of marriage and present to the mind its various delights.

all adulterers Thus you read in Hosea, chapter 7. 'They are all adulterers, as an oven heated by the baker.'[39] For he describes the fervour of the impious in this way. But the pious have a different fervour, a joyful one, aflame as they are with the love of Sacred Scripture.

he is walking in a vain show He alludes to the words of Psalm 38: 'Surely every man walketh in a vain show: surely they are disquieted in vain.'[40] They are walking in a vain show who live according to the spirit, not according to the flesh. According to the spirit and the mind we have been formed in the image of God, who is a spirit and is invisible; according to the flesh we come close to the likeness of the beasts.

18 **Be like the grasshopper and make night musical.** Grasshoppers do not sing except when the sun is boiling hot. They are silent in the morning, in the evening, and at night. And when they sing they make a noise like mournful hissing. But the pious sing mostly at night. And grasshoppers feed on dew, the pious on tears.

'That is a law for a married woman, not for me.' As if a virgin is not a woman just because Paul says: 'There is a difference between a wife and a virgin.'[41]

19 **out of the hard stones of the Gentiles** He alludes at the same time both to a well-known gospel passage, 'God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham,' and to a passage from one of the prophets.[42]

They pass through the whirlwinds of the world He alludes to the mystical wheels of Ezekiel.[43]

Let those stitch coats Mothers are forced to make coats for their offspring, but the coat of Christ was without seam, signifying the simplicity of the true Christian, whose whole concern is a virtuous mind. The woman who has married, however, has lost this coat, distracted as she is by various cares.[44]

lament that they are born [Erasmus discusses who the participle *lugens* 'lamenting' should modify, ie whether it should be *lugentes* or *lugentium*.] Although the manuscripts which I myself have seen nearly all agree, yet since the reading *lugentes* is not entirely consistent I would not hesitate to change it as follows: 'who delight in the cries of infants lamenting that they are born as soon as they see the light of day.' Pliny also says that we begin life by crying.[45] For the first sound from man being born is wailing.

fruitful in singleness like God himself What condign punishment do we call down upon the sophistical theologians who have corrupted everything?[46] With no help from the manuscripts I think the reading should be this: 'drawing no germ of life from without but *like the pearl* fruitful in the singleness of God.' Indeed a large pearl is also called a *unio*.[47] This jewel is produced in the purest shells and has not been formed from a source other than the shell itself to which it adheres. Pliny thinks that it comes into being from celestial dew and that it has a wondrous kinship with heaven. Read Pliny's book 9, chapter 35.[48] Further, as to Jerome's expression *dei unione* 'the singleness of God,' in one interpretation he is saying by apposition 'fruitful in singleness, which is God,' in another 'in the singleness of God, to whom she had been united by an infusion of the divine nature.' At the same time there is an allusion to the word *unio* in the sense of a jewel. A little later, mindful of this analogy, Jerome says: 'I gather the rose from the thorns, the gold from the earth, the pearl from the shell.'

what he had forbidden Namely, to possess boots. A boot is a particular kind of shoe. The ancients had no knowledge of the kind of boot we now wear. Christ forbids the apostles the possession of shoes.[49] And yet Peter in the Acts is ordered by an angel to put on his shoes.[50] Consequently Christ's prohibition about shoes must not be taken literally but must be understood in the sense that those who wish to discharge the office of apostle should cast aside their concern for all material things.

20 **'Doth the ploughman plough all day to sow?'** The passage is in Isaiah chapter 28.[51] Jerome applies it to the subject of matrimony and

virginity so that you might understand that the time for ploughing and sowing has passed and that now is the time for gathering the fruit. The fruit of marriage is virginity.

For they are not to be heard Some have thought that Paul had a wife whom he calls a sister in his letters and whom he greets and commends.[52]

21 **olive-plants** [The term in Jerome's text is *novellae olivarum.*] Some manuscripts had *sicut novellatio olivarum* 'like new olive shoots.'[53]

to pass over instances of childlessness Jerome intimates that those instances have a meaning different from their literal significance. And so he counters with a twofold explanation: first, that they serve as types; second, that together with the Mosaic law they have been eclipsed, like war and a good many other things.

'There is a difference also between a wife and a virgin.' This passage is cited differently here from what we commonly read, as has been pointed out elsewhere.[54]

22 **our own Ambrose** He adds 'our own' because Tertullian was African, as also was Cyprian, and Damasus was Spanish. Ambrose was Italian or, if you should prefer, Gallic.[55]

25 **my veil** [The word in Jerome's text is *theristrum.*] It is a type of garment and is mentioned by Julius Pollux.[56] It was apparently a summer garment, for θέρος in Greek means summer.

26 **'Come, my people enter ...'** The passage is in Isaiah, chapter 26.[57]

Daniel, in that upper story This account is in Daniel, chapter 6.[58] A *coenaculum* [the word in Jerome's text] is the upper part of a house, which is commonly called a *solarium.*

27 **to avoid the snare of a passion for vainglory** Instead of 'passion' perhaps the reading should be 'aroma,' as for instance an odour which delights for a time but does not satisfy the soul like the aroma of meat.

to make men point their fingers at you He alludes to the well-known line of Persius: 'Oh but it is a fine thing to have a finger pointed at one and to hear people say, "That's the man."'[59]

to look like eunuchs For eunuchs although they are garbed in masculine dress yet with their beardless chins have a feminine appearance.

28 **you see them loaded with chains** These persons use iron chains in place of a belt to make a display of their piety.

contrary to the Apostle's precept Who has written that it is shameful for a man to cultivate long hair.[60]

bare feet braving the cold [Erasmus' lemma differs from the text in Jerome's letter, which reads 'bare feet unable to brave the cold.'] Read

either 'bare feet braving the cold' or 'swollen feet unable to brave the cold.'

Such a one Rome groaned over some time back in Antimus He has spoken about these men without mentioning their names in his letter to Rusticus the monk.[61]

traces of the tongs For having been coiled on a curling iron their hair still retained the traces of the iron after the curling was done.

a plump young crane[62] This passage can scarcely be restored without help from the manuscripts. From the traces of a faulty text I think it should read as follows: 'What he likes is a savoury breakfast – a plump young bird commonly called a cheeper.' This is that you may understand that he has in his view a sumptuous breakfast because of the savouriness of the plump young bird. It is commonly called a cheeper because cheeping is the voice of noisy birds, as Aristophanes also testifies.[63] But whence comes the word *geranopopa* 'crane-cheeper'? Some manuscripts do not have it. Perhaps the reading should be γερανοπέπτα 'roasted crane,' which at that time was considered a delicacy, or perhaps γερανοκόπτα 'a crane-beater,' because in Greek a crane means also an instrument for grinding flour.[64]

a brother of the Thracian king Jerome means that he is more than a brother, that is, that he is very similar. The reference is to Diomedes, king of Thrace, who was wont to feed the flesh of strangers to his horses. He was slain by Hercules, if we believe the fable.[65]

29 **an unblushing effrontery** [Erasmus suggests alternate readings for the participle *attrito* in the Latin of this phrase.] I read *abstrito* or at least *absterso*.

a stage parasite He calls mimes vile and vulgar comedies in which parasites are presented as the most contemptible flatterers.

'My dear puppy' The blandishments of one of these females are imitated.

the sickly taste of married ladies He uses 'sickly' for 'soft and effeminate' and the word *saliva* in the sense of a taste or opinion that a person has imbibed in his earliest years. The word has been taken over from infants, who shrink back from a taste they have not been accustomed to and who think that flavour most agreeable which their first nurses gave to the food that had been premasticated. Jerome has repeated the words of the satirist.[66]

to pronounce them naturally [The Latin text literally is 'all that is born,' and Erasmus explains:] That is, whatever is natural, whatever has not been adulterated by cunning. The expression 'an adultery of the tongue' was finely chosen.

30 **Many years ago**[67] This is that account which everyone remembers, even those who have never read a single word of the writings of Jerome. He was flogged, they say, because he had read Cicero. And out of a marvellous devotion, as it were, they shun all good literature. They have nothing to do with it lest by chance unwittingly they might come upon some word of Cicero and be flogged with Jerome. At the same time they consider themselves very close to the apostles if their language is as coarse as possible. But when St Jerome replies to Rufinus, who reproached him with this passage, he calls the incident a dream, although here he denies that it was a dream.[68] Nor did Jerome ever think that Cicero should not be read; rather we ought to read him at least to gain a better understanding of theology and to handle it more skilfully. What else is he saying in his letter to the orator Magnus?[69] But these people, although they grow old spending their entire life with sophistical nonsense and in meaningless quarrels over petty issues, pride themselves on having had nothing to do with good authors. Consequently Leo x, who occupied the Roman see when I wrote this, rightly decreed that no one in those public schools that are called universities should devote all his energy for more than five years so exclusively to rhetoric and poetry that he neglects more wholesome literature.[70] And indeed his prohibition with regard to poetry also applied to philosophy. I also in my younger days wrote a work criticizing the stupid fanaticism of those who under the pretext of religion rail at more polished literature because they have not been acquainted with it.[71] We owe it to them that the authors most worthy of being read are the authors that have been most corrupted. Thanks to them it has also happened that more labour has been expended by several scholars in restoring the works of Jerome than he himself spent in writing them. What is more, there are sacrilegious men who dare to call a man of his stature and holiness poetic and less than devout because he does not write *quaestiones* in the style of Duns Scotus. As if Paul or the prophets or any of the old and truly Christian theologians wrote in that way. Not even did Aristotle himself, a pagan and not a man of approved life among the philosophers, who left so much money that Pliny ranks him among the Croesuses and Crassuses,[72] nor was he the father of such subtleties that he ever talked as much sophistical nonsense as those people do who call themselves doctors and interpreters of Holy Scripture.

to fall under such an inquisition Inquisitions [Jerome's word is *quaestiones*] are also called tortures, by which a confession of the truth is extorted.

32 **she appears in rags** He calls 'rags' clothes that are worn and torn.
to a love-feast *'Αγάπη* [Jerome's word] means 'love' or 'charity.' Thus even today among the common folk of Italy and France and indeed among our own people almsgiving is called charity. Not without reason did Jerome choose to use this word, although he describes how their giving, which they herald as an act of charity, is without love. With this name they expressly signified a banquet where the poor were refreshed. Jude also used this word in his Epistle, referring to something [a meal] not unlike the food baskets given out by the pagans.[73]

34 **coenobites** From *κοινός* meaning 'common' and *βίος* meaning 'life or 'way of life.' There is a tradition that the practice derived from Pythagoras, who is well known for the adage: 'Between friends all is common.'[74] According to Gellius they used to call this way of life *κοινόβιος*.[75]
anchorites From *ἀναχωρεῖν* meaning 'to withdraw'

35 **that no one need ask for or go without what he wants** Some manuscripts had the reading: 'that no one need ask for or lack anything.' Who does not realize that both of these readings are defective? I am of the opinion that the reading should be 'that no one has reason to ask,' that is, that it is not necessary to make any demands.[76]
when they have finished their tasks Jerome calls their prescribed work 'tasks' or, if you prefer, 'little labours.'
After Pentecost The Paschal season is a fifty-day period called *πεντηκοστή* in Greek, on the last day of which the Holy Spirit was sent. From Easter to the Ascension of the Lord fasting was forbidden by church custom, as the decretals also testify. From this passage it is quite clear that Christians when they were fasting were once accustomed to postpone eating until evening. And the monks, not to appear to be fasting, would take food at midday, which they now generally do when fasting in Lent.
the Essenes Here the text had been corrupted to read *esse nos debere* 'we ought to be,' instead of *Essenos* 'the Essenes.' The Essenes were a people of the interior of Judaea situated towards the west. They were a new school of philosophers: they had no association with women, they lived on dates, they had contempt for money. Their numbers grew with the influx of refugees. No one was admitted, however, who was conscious of any fault, even the slightest. This is pretty much what Pliny has to say, and it is also the description of Josephus and Philo.[77]

Philo, Plato's imitator This Philo was a Jew of whom it was said, as Jerome attests, 'Either Philo imitates Plato or Plato Philo.'[78]

Josephus, the Greek Livy He wrote in Greek most eloquently, though he was born a Jew. He had become highly proficient in a tongue that was not his own.[79]

38 **Phygellus and Alexander** This pair had deserted Paul, as I have pointed out elsewhere.[80]

conversed fearlessly with an angel [Erasmus comments on Jerome's use of the verb *fabulari* 'to converse.'] He has used an informal word beautifully, for friends 'converse' with one another when they speak rather freely.

'Take thee a great roll ...' [The word for 'roll' in Jerome's text is *tomus*, and Erasmus comments:] τόμος is Greek for *volumen*.[81] The passage is in Isaiah, chapter 8: 'Take thee a great book, and write in it with a man's pen: Quickly carry away the spoils, quickly carry off the prey.' And a little later there follows: 'And I went unto the prophetess, and she conceived and bore a son,' etc.[82]

41 **when Mary, the mother of the Lord** See Exodus, chapter 15.[83] It is Mary the prophetess [Miriam], the sister of Aaron, her timbrel in her hand, who chanted to her choir of women – an episode which Jerome here twists to the Virgin Mary.

Antidote

He seems in this letter to direct the barbs of his satire against virgins and monks and clerics and to depict their way of life rather sharply. But since he criticizes no one by name and censures the wicked, not the upright, those who have lived this kind of life must be blamed, not Jerome, who has painted them in their true colours.

Addendum

Jerome also seems to direct some rather harsh remarks against marriage, on which he did not entirely look with favour. Nay rather he favoured it only to the extent that he wished it to be the least defiled by lust and the most like virginity. Note particularly that rather harsh dictum: 'There is a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing.'[84] Jerome means that under the law of the gospel it is the time to refrain from embracing. Again note this comment: 'Let those stitch coats,' etc, as if married women may not possess the coat of Christ.[85] And again this observation: 'To show that virginity is natural while wedlock only follows guilt ...'[86] Jerome means that intercourse

belongs to a nature that has been corrupted, not to a nature as it was created. There are also other statements that, if anyone should examine them unfairly, would seem at variance with the general opinion of the theologians, who consider matrimony one of the seven sacraments. But if all these comments are read in the spirit in which Jerome wrote them they contain nothing to offend anyone.

There is that famous passage in this letter which certain persons ridiculously bandy about obviously to rebut those who think that Jerome lost his virginity in his youth, a fact that he himself frankly admits in several places.[87] But ignorance of the figure of speech caused the boastful error of those individuals. When Jerome said 'we preserve virginity' he used the same metaphorical expression Virgil used when he wrote: 'He raises them from the ground as lofty alders.'[88] For he preserves who gives a justification for preserving. Also the title of the letter is not on praising virginity but on guarding it. And so they childishly rejoice who appear very clever in their own eyes when they reason as follows: Jerome preserves virginity; but no one preserves what he does not have. As if we may not also preserve things that belong to another! If Jerome speaks otherwise about his own virginity, how consistent are his words?[89] 'We must proceed by a different path,' he says in this letter, 'for our purpose is not the praise of virginity but its preservation. To know that it is a good thing is not enough; when we have chosen it we must guard it with jealous care.'[90] Although certain individuals publicize these remarks in their writings, and do so with malicious misrepresentation, nevertheless they delight in being called 'Our Masters,' and to themselves they seem like demigods as they look down with astonishing arrogance on grammarians. If they had paid some attention to grammar they would not in this way have passed themselves on to young boys as subjects for derision. And if they are so protective of the renown of this most holy man they could have said that he had lapsed before his baptism. For those for whom the truth has always pleased do not want to be praised with lies.

LETTER 4

JEROME TO DAMASUS

This letter and Erasmus' summary and annotations are in HO III 59 verso–60 verso. The letter is Ep 15 in PL, Fremantle, and Hilberg. It is Jerome's first letter to Pope Damasus (366–84), whom he will later serve as secretary in Rome. It is a significant affirmation of the authority of the 'chair of Peter.'

A summary of the following letter[1]

He wrote this letter as soon as he had migrated to Syria and was dwelling in that region which is near Antioch. Although they had been ousted from most places, the Arian factions at this time nevertheless either still held control of several churches or were seeking to gain control. The church of Antioch, which long ago had been tossed about in violent upheavals, seemed still to smack of the Arian heresy and was requiring of everyone the formula of three *hypostases*.[2] Believing such a profession suspect, Jerome consults Damasus, the bishop of Rome, and asks him to signify in a letter whether he ought to accept this formula. He forewarns him that poison lurks in these words lest he approve of the Campenses, who are seeking his support.[3] It is a letter written with more than the usual care, addressed as it is to a learned pope on a matter close to his heart.

Text of Jerome's letter

1 Since the East, shattered as it is by the **long-standing feuds** subsisting between its peoples, is bit by bit tearing into shreds the **seamless** vest of the Lord, 'woven from the top throughout,' since the foxes are destroying **the vineyard of Christ**, and since among **the broken cisterns** that hold no water it is hard to discover **'the sealed fountain'** and 'the garden enclosed,' I think it my duty to consult the chair of Peter, and to turn to a church whose faith has been praised by Paul. I appeal for spiritual food to the church whence I have received the garb of Christ. The wide space **of sea** and land that lies between us cannot deter me from searching for 'the pearl of great price.' **'Wheresoever the body is**, there will the eagles be gathered together.' Evil children have **squandered** their patrimony; you alone **keep your heritage intact**. The fruitful soil of Rome, when it receives the **pure seed** of the Lord, bears fruit a hundredfold; but here the seed corn is **choked in the furrows** and **nothing grows but**

darnel or oats. In the West the Sun of righteousness is even now rising; in the East, Lucifer, who fell from heaven, has once more set his throne above the stars. 'Ye are the light of the world,' 'ye are the salt of the earth,' ye are '**vessels of gold** and of silver.' Here are vessels of wood or earth, which wait for **the rod of iron**, and **eternal fire**.

2 Yet, though your greatness terrifies me, your kindness attracts me. **From the priest I demand the safe keeping of the victim**, from the shepherd the protection due to the sheep. **Away with all that is overweening;** let the state of Roman majesty withdraw. My words are spoken to **the successor of the fisherman**, to the disciple of the cross. As I follow no leader save Christ, so I communicate with none but your blessedness, that is with the chair of Peter. For this, I know, is **the rock on which** the church is built! **This is the house** where alone the paschal lamb can rightly be eaten. This is the ark of Noah, and he who is not found in it shall perish when the flood prevails. But since **by reason of my sins** I have betaken myself to this desert which lies **between Syria and the uncivilized waste**, I cannot, owing to the great distance between us, always ask of your sanctity **the holy thing of the Lord**. Consequently I here follow the Egyptian confessors **who share your faith**, and anchor my frail craft under the shadow of their **great argosies**. I know nothing of Vitalis; I reject Meletius; **I have nothing to do with Paulinus**. He that gathers not with you scatters; he that is not of Christ is of Antichrist.

3 Just now, I am sorry to say, those Arians, **the Campenses**, are trying to extort from me, a Roman Christian, their unheard-of formula of **three hypostases**. And this, too, **after the definition of Nicaea** and **the decree of Alexandria** in which the West has joined. Where, I should like to know, are the apostles of these doctrines? Where is their Paul, their new Doctor of the Gentiles? I ask them what three hypostases are supposed to mean. They reply three Persons subsisting. I rejoin that this is my belief. They are not satisfied with the meaning, they demand the term. Surely some secret venom lurks in the words. 'If any man refuse,' I cry, 'to acknowledge three hypostases in the sense of three things hypostatized, that is three Persons subsisting, let him be anathema.' Yet, because I do not learn their words, I am counted a heretic. 'But, if any one, understanding by hypostasis **essence**, deny that in the three Persons there is one hypostasis, he has no part in Christ.' Because this is my confession I, like you, am **branded with the stigma** of Sabellianism.

4 If you think fit enact a decree; and then I shall not hesitate to speak of three hypostases. Order a new creed to supersede the Nicene; and then, whether we are Arians or orthodox, one confession will do for us all. In the whole range of **secular learning** hypostasis never means anything but essence. And can anyone, I ask, be so profane as to speak of three essences or substances in the Godhead? **There is one nature** of God and one only; and this, and this alone, truly *is*. For **absolute being** is derived from no other source but is all its own. All things besides, that is, all things

created, although they appear to be, are not. For there was a time when they were not, and that which once was not may again cease to be. God alone, who is eternal, that is to say, who has no beginning, really deserves to be called an essence. Therefore also he says to Moses from the bush, 'I am that I am,' and Moses says of him, 'I am hath sent me.' As the angels, the sky, the earth, the seas, all existed at the time, it must have been as the absolute being that God claimed for himself the name of essence, which apparently was common to all. But because his nature alone is perfect, and because in the three Persons there subsists but one Godhead, which truly is and is one nature; whosoever in the name of religion declares that there are in the Godhead three elements, three hypostases, that is, or essences, is striving really to predicate three natures of God. And if this is true, why are we severed by walls from Arius, when in dishonesty we are one with him? Let **Ursicinus** be made the colleague of your blessedness; **let Auxentius be associated with Ambrose**. But may the faith of Rome never come to such a pass! May the devout hearts of your people never be infected with such unholy doctrines! Let us be satisfied to speak of one substance and of three subsisting Persons – perfect, equal, coeternal. Let us keep to one hypostasis, if such be your pleasure, and say nothing of three. It is a bad sign when those who mean the same thing use different words. Let us be satisfied with the form of creed which we have hitherto used. Or, if you think it right that I should speak of three hypostases, explaining what I mean by them, I am ready to submit. But, believe me, there is poison hidden under their honey; the angel of Satan has transformed himself into an angel of light. they give a plausible explanation of the term hypostasis; yet when I profess to hold it in the same sense they count me a heretic. Why are they so tenacious of a word? Why do they shelter themselves under ambiguous language? If their belief corresponds to their explanation of it, I do not condemn them for keeping it. On the other hand, if my belief corresponds to their expressed opinions, they should allow me to set forth their meaning in my own words.

5 I implore your blessedness, therefore, by the crucified Saviour of the world, and **by the consubstantial Trinity**, to authorize me by letter either to use or to refuse this formula of three hypostases. And lest **the obscurity of my present abode** may baffle the bearers of your letter, I pray you to address it to Evagrius, the presbyter, with whom you are well acquainted. I beg you also to signify with whom I am to communicate at Antioch. Not, I hope, with the Campenses; for they – with their allies the heretics of Tarsus – only desire communion with you to preach with greater authority their traditional doctrine of three hypostases.

Annotations

1 **long-standing feuds** The most ancient heresies arose in the East, that is, in Syria and Phrygia.

seamless He understands 'the seamless vest of the Lord' to mean the concord of the Catholic church.[4]

the vineyard of Christ So he understands the verse in chapter 2 of the mystical Canticle: 'Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines.'[5]

the broken cisterns He alludes unless I am mistaken to these words in chapter 2 of the Second Letter of Peter: 'These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest.'[6] He is describing heretics with these words. But the original passage is in Jeremiah, chapter 2: 'They have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.'[7] Zechariah in chapter 7 also mentions the pit without water.[8]

'the sealed fountain' He opposes this to 'the broken cisterns' and understands it to mean the truth of the church.[9]

of sea [Jerome has used the expression *elementi liquentis.*] Thus he calls the sea, and so too did Virgil when he wrote *camposque liquentes.*[10]

'Wheresoever the body is ...' The passage is in Luke, chapter 17.[11] For the body he understands Christ, for the eagles the devout. This accords with the proverb: 'The saints like the eagle will have their youth renewed.'[12]

squandered [Jerome wrote *profligato*, and Erasmus writes:] That is, *profuso*. He alludes to the gospel parable of the prodigal and the frugal sons.[13]

keep your heritage intact [Jerome's text has 'the heritage of your fathers,' and Erasmus comments:] I think 'of your father' should be read. He has the gospel parable in mind.

pure seed It receives the seed, that is, the gospel teaching.[14] The grandiloquence and lofty flow of words extol these wonders.

choked in the furrows For seeds are buried, especially in the furrows of a ploughed field.

nothing grows but darnel or oats [Jerome actually wrote 'they degenerate into darnel and oats,' and Erasmus comments:] He elegantly said 'they degenerate.' For these have sprung not from their own genus but from degenerate seed corn and have crossed over into another species, as it were. For that reason he said above 'the pure seed,' which stands in contrast to degenerate seed.

In the West For Rome is situated in the West, and the church is called the Western church. Here the faith is preserved intact, while various errors divide the East.

'vessels of gold ...' He alludes to a passage in the Second Letter to Timothy, chapter 2, about the different vessels in a great house.[15]

the rod of iron He alludes to that well-known passage of the psalmist: 'Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron.'[16]

eternal fire This refers to the vessels of wood.

2 **From the priest ... the victim** A very artful division: it is the duty of the shepherd to protect the flock, of the priest to offer the victim. Jerome calls the sacred teaching with which the people are fed the victim.

Away with all that is overweening He calls harsh and offensive conduct overweening because it is highly offensive to importune the Roman pontiff in that way. And we use the verb *flagito* 'I demand' [Jerome used this word in the preceding sentence] when we make immoderate demands.

the successor of the fisherman He makes clear that the Roman pontiff ought to remove himself far from all arrogance, since he has succeeded a fisherman and takes the place of one who has been crucified, that is, of the most humble.

the rock on which Not on Rome in my opinion.[17] For it is possible for Rome also to degenerate. Rather on that faith which Peter professed and which up to this time the Roman church preserved inasmuch as it suffered less than any other church from heresies.

This is the house Here Jerome seems totally convinced that all churches ought to be under the jurisdiction of the Roman see, or at least not be hostile to it, a see that in a special way glories in that apostle who held first place among the apostles, and is so orthodox that it is first in rank among the orthodox. Moreover he alludes to the house where Christ with the twelve apostles ate the paschal lamb.[18] And he alludes to what is written in chapter 12 of Exodus concerning the paschal meal: 'In one house shall it be eaten; thou shalt not carry forth ought of the flesh abroad out of the house.'[19]

by reason of my sins That is, intending to do penance

between Syria and the uncivilized waste There is an immense desert between Syria and the Agareni or Saracens where Jerome lived at first or at least afterwards, that is, following his early movements.[20]

the holy thing of the Lord He wishes by an exceptional communion with the church of Antioch also to be subject to the church of Rome. He calls the body of Christ 'the holy thing of the Lord.'

who share your faith He calls the holy monks or rather bishops in union with the Roman see confessors. Among them was Theophilus of Alexandria.[21]

great argosies They are the largest ships.

I have nothing to do with Paulinus Paulinus was the bishop of

Antioch installed by Lucifer.[22] There had also been other bishops of that same church who themselves were not free of the stigma of the Arian heresy. Vitalis was the twentieth bishop of that church, Paulinus the twenty-second. I have put Meletius [into the text of Jerome's letter] in place of Milesius, following St Jerome's *Catalogus*, in which he enumerates seventeen bishops who he thinks should be reckoned as enemies rather than as bishops. Meletius, first bishop of Sebaste in Armenia, had been translated to Antioch by the Arians. There they held a synod, and rejecting the term *homoousion* they championed the doctrine of the Macedonians.[23]

3 **the Campenses** At the end of this letter he writes that the Campenses had been allied with the heretics of Tarsus. Moreover *campe* in Greek means a bending or turning, and unless I am mistaken Ptolemy calls that part of Cilicia where the Gulf of Issus with its curving shore turns towards Syria not far from Antioch and Chalcis Campe.[24]

three *hypostases* Ὑπόστασις has various meanings in Greek.[25] Sometimes it means 'substance,' as in the expression χαρακτὴρ ὑποστάσεως, that is, *figura substantiae*, in the Letter to the Hebrews.[26] Sometimes it means 'foundation' or 'matter,' as ὑπόστασις in Hebrews' *Fides est substantia rerum sperandarum* and ἐν ταύτῃ ὑπόστασει in Corinthians' *in hac substantia gloriae*.[27] Philosophers define substance as that which is not an accident or as something that exists by itself and does not inhere in another or has accidents subsisting in it. The Greeks proposed three *hypostases* and understood *hypostasis* as 'person.' We may note that the word was unknown to the Romans.

after the definition of Nicaea The Council of Nicaea, in which 318 bishops assembled, was the first.[28] There the Arian error concerning *homoousion* was condemned. This error denied that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were of the same essence. Nicaea is a town in Bithynia.

the decree of Alexandria Arius had first been a priest in this church. Expelled therefrom he drew practically the whole world into his error, which several times even the emperors favoured. And he was close to taking control of Rome as well. Thus we read that after Arius had been condemned at the Nicaean council bishops assembled again at Alexandria among whom there were also Romans or at least some from the Western church.[29] For this reason Jerome speaks of them above as those 'who share your faith.' This happened after Athanasius and other bishops had been recalled from exile by the Emperor Constans.[30]

essence Quintilian translates *οὐσία* [Jerome's text has the Latin *usia*] as *essentia* 'essence.'[31] The term *hypostasis* is ambiguous.

branded with the stigma A *cauterium* [Jerome's word, which Erasmus also gives in Greek] is a red-hot iron used for burning in a brand mark. This was once done to army recruits when they were administered the military oath. Jerome alludes to this in speaking about baptism.[32]

4 **secular learning** That is, among the philosophers, as has been said

There is one nature [Erasmus in his annotation slightly rearranges Jerome's sentence to express its meaning better.]

absolute being [Jerome's Latin here is 'quod subsistit' and Erasmus comments:] He is showing that the term *hypostasis* derives from the Greek verb *ὑποστάμαι* 'to subsist.'

Ursicinus I think Ursicinus should be read [rather than Ursinus]. This deacon was a rival of Damasus in claiming the papacy. The issue was decided by the sword in the basilica of Sicininus. It resulted in the death of many on both sides. But Damasus prevailed, and Ursicinus was transferred to the church of Naples. It seems that Ursicinus had belonged to the Arian faction to which Liberius, Damasus' predecessor as pope, also belonged.[33]

let Auxentius be associated with Ambrose Auxentius preceded Ambrose [as bishop of Milan], but belonged to the Arian faction. After his belated death and Ambrose's election as his successor all of Italy returned to the orthodox faith [*ad rectam fidem*].

5 **by the consubstantial Trinity** [Jerome's text had *per homousiam trinitatem*, which Erasmus corrected.] I think *homoousion* should be read. It is neuter in gender, being an adjective derived from *ὁμοῦ* 'the same' and *οὐσία* 'essence,' that is, 'of the same or exactly similar essence.'

the obscurity of my present abode Since he was concealing himself in a lowly and unknown place

LETTER 5

JEROME TO MAGNUS, ROMAN ORATOR

This letter, with Erasmus' summary and annotations, is in HO III 148 verso–149 verso and is Ep 70 in PL, Fremantle, and Hilberg. It is an important defence of the use of secular learning by Christians and has been called 'Jerome's handbook of Christian humanism' (Edwin A. Quain 'St Jerome as a Humanist' in *A Monument to St Jerome* ed F.X. Murphy [New York 1952] 219). Erasmus quotes from it at length in his *Antibarbari* (CWE 23 91–3)

A summary of the following letter

Rufinus incites Magnus, a Roman orator, to ask Jerome why he mixes the writings of pagans into his ecclesiastical works and contaminates the sacred with the profane. Jerome gives an explanation for this and shows to what extent it is allowed and whose example he follows.

Text of Jerome's letter

1 That our friend Sebesius has profited by your advice I have learned less from your letter than from his own penitence. And strange to say the pleasure which he has given me since his rebuke is greater than the pain he caused me from his previous waywardness. There has been indeed a conflict between indulgence in the father, and affection in the son; while the former is anxious to forget the past, the latter is eager to promise dutiful behaviour in the future. Accordingly you and I must equally rejoice, you because you have successfully put a pupil to the test, I because I have received a son again.

2 You ask me at the close of your letter why it is that sometimes in my writings I quote examples from secular literature and thus defile the whiteness of the church with the foulness of heathenism. I will now briefly answer your question. You would never have asked it, had not your mind been wholly taken up with Tully; you would never have asked it had you made it a practice **instead of studying Volcatius** to read the holy Scriptures and the commentators upon them. For who is there who does not know that both in Moses and in the prophets there are passages cited from Gentile books and that Solomon proposed questions to the philosophers of Tyre and answered others put to him by them? In the commencement of the book of Proverbs he charges us to understand prudent maxims and shrewd adages, parables and obscure discourse, the words of the wise and their dark sayings; all of which belong

by right to the sphere **of the dialectician** and the philosopher. The apostle Paul also, in writing **to Titus**, has used a line of the poet Epimenides: 'The Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies.' Half of which line was afterwards adopted by Callimachus. It is not surprising that a literal rendering of the words into Latin should fail to preserve the metre, seeing that Homer when translated into the same language is scarcely intelligible even in prose. In another Epistle **Paul quotes a line of Menander**: 'Evil communications corrupt good manners.' And when he is arguing with the Athenians upon Areopagus he calls Aratus as a witness, citing from him the words 'For we are also his offspring;' **in Greek** τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένος ἐσμέν, the close of a heroic verse. And as if this were not enough, that leader of the Christian army, that unvanquished pleader for the cause of Christ, skilfully turns **a chance inscription** into proof of the faith. For he had learned from the true David to wrench the sword of the enemy out of his hand and with his own blade to cut off the head of the arrogant Goliath. He had read in Deuteronomy the command given by the voice of the Lord that when a captive woman had had her head shaved, her eyebrows and all her hair cut off, and her nails pared, she might then be taken to wife. Is it surprising that I too, admiring the fairness of her form and the grace of her eloquence, desire to make that secular wisdom which is my captive and my handmaid, a matron of the true Israel? Or that shaving off and cutting away all in her that is dead, whether this be idolatry, pleasure, error, or lust, I **take her to myself** clean and pure and beget by her **servants** for the Lord of Sabaoth? My efforts promote the advantage of Christ's family, my so-called defilement with an alien increases the number of my fellow servants. Hosea took a wife of whoredoms, Gomer the daughter of Diblaim, and this harlot bore him a son called Jezreel or the seed of God. Isaiah speaks of a sharp razor which shaves 'the head of sinners and the hair of their feet;' and Ezekiel shaves his head as a type of that Jerusalem which has been a harlot, in sign that whatever in her is devoid of sense and life must be removed.

3 Cyprian, a man renowned both for his eloquence and for his martyr's death, was assailed – so Firmian tells us – for having used in his treatise against Demetrius passages from the prophets and the apostles which the latter declared to be fabricated and made up, instead of passages from the philosophers and poets whose authority he, as a heathen, could not well gainsay. Celsus and Porphyry have written against us and have been ably answered, the former by Origen, the latter by Methodius, Eusebius, and Apollinaris. Origen wrote a treatise in eight books, the work of Methodius extended to ten thousand lines, while Eusebius and Apollinaris composed twenty-five and thirty volumes respectively. Read these and you will find that compared with them I am a mere tyro in learning, and that, as my wits have long lain fallow, I can barely recall as in a dream what I have learned as a boy. The emperor Julian found time during his Parthian campaign to vomit forth seven books against Christ and, as so often happens in poetic legends, only wounded himself with his own sword. Were I to try to confute him with the doctrines of philosophers and stoics

you would doubtless forbid me to strike a mad dog with the club of Hercules. It is true that he presently felt in battle the hand of our Nazarene or, as he used to call him, the Galilean, and that **pierced by insults** he was paid due recompense for his foul calumnies. To prove the antiquity of the Jewish people Josephus has written two books against Appio, a grammarian of Alexandria; and in these he brings forward so many quotations from secular writers as to make me marvel how a Hebrew brought up from his childhood to read the sacred Scriptures could also have perused the whole library of the Greeks. Need I speak of Philo, whom **critics** call **another or second Jewish Plato**?

4 Let me now run through the list of our own writers. Did not Quadratus, a disciple of the apostles and bishop of the Athenian church, deliver to the emperor Hadrian (on the occasion of his visit to the Eleusinian mysteries) a treatise in defence of our religion? And so great was the admiration caused in everyone by his eminent ability that it stilled a most severe persecution. The philosopher Aristides, a man of great eloquence, presented to the same emperor an apology for the Christians composed of extracts from philosophic writers. His example was afterwards followed by Justin, another philosopher, who delivered to Antoninus Pius and his sons and to the senate a treatise *Against the Gentiles*, in which he defended the ignominy of the cross and preached the resurrection of Christ with all freedom. Need I speak of Melito, bishop of Sardis, of Apollinaris, chief-priest of the church of Hierapolis, of Dionysius, bishop of the Corinthians, of Tatian, of Bardesanes, of Irenaeus, successor to the martyr Pothinus; all of whom have in many volumes explained the uprisings of the several heresies and tracked them back, each to the philosophic source from which it flows? Pantaenus, a philosopher of the Stoic school, was on account of his great reputation for learning sent by Demetrius, bishop of Alexandria, to India to preach Christ to the Brahmans and philosophers there. Clement, a presbyter of Alexandria, in my judgment the most learned of men, wrote eight books of *Miscellanies* and as many of **Outline Sketches**, a treatise against the Gentiles, and three volumes called the *Pedagogue*. Is there any want of learning in these, or are they not rather drawn from the very heart of philosophy? Imitating his example Origen wrote ten books of *Miscellanies*, in which he compares together the opinions held respectively by Christians and by philosophers, and confirms all the dogmas of our religion by quotations from Plato and Aristotle, from Numenius and Cornutus. Miltiades also wrote an excellent treatise against the Gentiles. Moreover Hippolytus and a Roman senator named Apollonius have each compiled apologetic works. The books of Julius Africanus, who wrote a history of his own time, are still extant, as also are those of Theodore, who was afterwards called Gregory, a man endowed with apostolic miracles as well as with apostolic virtues. We still have the works of Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, of Anatolius, chief priest of the church of Laodicea, of the presbyters Pamphilus, Pierius, Lucian, Malchion; of Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea, Eustathius of Antioch and Athanasius of Alexandria; of Eusebius of Emisa,

of Triphyllius of Cyprus, of Asterius of Scythopolis, of the confessor Serapion, of Titus bishop of Bostra; and of the Cappadocians Basil, Gregory, and Amphilochius. All these writers so frequently interweave in their books the doctrines and maxims of the philosophers that you might easily be at a loss which to admire most, their secular erudition or their knowledge of the Scriptures.

5 I will pass on to Latin writers. Can anything be more learned or more pointed than the style of Tertullian? His *Apology* and his books *Against the Gentiles* contain all the wisdom of the world. Minucius Felix, a pleader in the Roman courts, has ransacked all heathen literature to adorn the pages of his *Octavius* and of his treatise *Against the Astrologers* (unless indeed this latter is falsely ascribed to him). Arnobius has published seven books against the Gentiles, and his pupil Lactantius as many, besides two volumes, one *On Anger* and the other *On the Creative Activity of God*. If you read any of these you will find **in them an epitome** of Cicero's dialogues. The martyr Victorinus, though as a writer deficient in learning, is not deficient in the wish to use what learning he has. Then there is Cyprian. With what terseness, with what knowledge of all history, with what splendid rhetoric and argument has he touched the theme that idols are no gods! Hilary too, a confessor and bishop of my own day, has imitated Quintilian's twelve books both in number and in style, and has also shown his ability as a writer in his short treatise against Dioscorus the physician. In the reign of Constantine the presbyter Juvencus set forth in verse the story of our Lord and Saviour, and did not shrink from forcing into metre the majestic phrases of the gospel. Of other writers dead and living I say nothing. Their aim and their ability are evident to all who read them.

6 You must not adopt the mistaken opinion that while in dealing with the Gentiles one may appeal to their literature, in all other discussions one ought to ignore it; for almost all the books of all these writers – except those who like Epicurus are no scholars – are extremely full of erudition and philosophy. I incline indeed to fancy – the thought comes into my head as I dictate – that you yourself know quite well what has always been the practice of the learned in this matter. I believe that in putting this question to me you are only the mouthpiece of another who by reason of his love for the histories of Sallust might well be called **Calpurnius** Lanarius. Please beg of him not to envy eaters their teeth because he is toothless himself, and not to make light of the eyes of gazelles because he is himself a mole. Here as you see there is abundant material for a discussion, but I have already filled the limits at my disposal.

Annotations

2 **instead of studying Volcatius** Volcatius wrote commentaries on Cicero, as Seneca attests.[1] Certain pedants had put *supercilio* in place of *Volcatio*. What presumption, to change without batting an eye what one does not understand!

of the dialectician He attributes the subtle tricks to the dialecticians because of their way of arguing.

to Titus [Erasmus gives the Greek and the Latin text of the Epimenides quotation in Titus 1:12 and explains:] *θηρίον* properly means a harmful animal such as a viper or a crocodile. And he calls those men devoted to the belly 'bellies.' This line became famous because it involves a syllogism called a *ψευδόμενος*, that is, a fallacy, of which it is a classic example.

Paul quotes a line of Menander [Erasmus repeats the Greek and the Latin text of the line in 1 Corinthians 15:33 and comments on Jerome's use of the term *senarius*, that is, a verse of six feet, in referring to it:] For it is an iambic trimeter.

in Greek ... [Erasmus, like Jerome, also gives the Latin of the quotation in Acts 17:28 and comments:] It is a half-line from the *Phaenomena* of Aratus, a work that still survives.[2]

a chance inscription Because Paul had found in Athens an altar inscribed 'To an Unknown God.'[3] It is an effective rhetorical device to say that what we are urging to be done has already been done. I urge you to worship the God whom you already worship without knowing him. Philostratus tells a similar story about Leo.[4] When the latter came before the people to urge peace and the people had immediately burst into laughter at the sight of him, obese as he was, he said: 'You laugh, do you? I have a wife more obese than myself, yet one small bed holds us when we agree, but when we are at odds not even the entire house holds us.' And so he turned a chance laugh into an argument for urging peace.

I take her to myself [Jerome uses the Latin word *mixtus* in this passage, and Erasmus explains:] The Greeks use the verb 'to be mixed' in place of the verb 'to unite,' which it also means here.

servants [The word Jerome uses is *vernaculos*, and Erasmus writes:] He calls *vernas vernaculos*. *Verna* is a slave born in your house. Such slaves were treated like one's children.

3 **pierced by insults** What does this expression 'pierced by insults' mean? Is it a great thing for someone to revile that beast? The reading therefore must be 'by a spear thrust.' And so writes Orosius,[5] for Julian, after a most wicked vow to consign all monks and bishops to the flames, was undone by the thrust of a spear wielded by a horse-soldier whom he chanced to meet.

critics Judges of the work of others are called critics. The word derives from the Greek *κρίνω* 'to judge.'

another or second Jewish Plato Manuscripts disagree. The reading, I think, should be 'the second or the Jewish Plato.'

4 *Outline Sketches* [Jerome has used the Greek word ὑποτυπώσεων for the title of Clement's work.] *Dispositionum* 'arrangements' has been added in some books, but I think the reading should be *expositionum* 'statements of fact.' For ὑποτύπωσις means explaining something and setting it before one's eyes.[6]

5 **in them an epitome** [Jerome has used the Greek word ἐπιτομή.] That is, a compendium or abridgement

6 **Calpurnius** Jerome rather often intrudes this Calpurnius, connecting him with the histories of Sallust,[7] and it is still not clear who he is, except that his names seem to be derived from 'hot ovens' and 'butchers' [*a calidis furnis et lanionibus*]. One therefore may understand that he was immoderate, arrogant, and tyrannical. He is, I believe, pointing to Rufinus.

LETTER 6

JEROME TO PAULINUS

This letter and Erasmus' summary and annotations are in HO IV 2–5 verso. The letter is Ep 53 in PL, Fremantle, and Hilberg. It was written in response to Paulinus, a wealthy and well-educated Christian who had settled as an ascetic at Nola (near Naples) where he was later made bishop. Jerome urges him to the diligent study of Holy Scripture and briefly surveys the books of the Old and New Testaments.

A summary of the following letter by Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam, professor of sacred theology[1]

With examples of wise pagans as well as of men of the church he summons Paulinus to the study of literature, especially sacred literature, and he shows what difficulties there are in this endeavour. Then he sets before his eyes the world of Holy Scripture, as it were, and displays it as if through a lattice-work window in order to incite him more to the study of it, while at the same time with pithy remarks he commends each of its books and their authors and themes.

Text of Jerome's letter

1 Our brother Ambrose has delivered to me, along with your little gifts, a most charming letter which, though it comes **at the beginning of our friendship**, gives assurance of tried fidelity and of long-continued attachment. A true intimacy cemented by Christ himself is not one which depends upon material considerations, or upon the presence of the persons, or upon an insincere and exaggerated flattery; but one such as ours, wrought by a common fear of God and a joint study of the divine Scriptures.

We read in old tales that men traversed provinces, crossed seas, and visited strange peoples, simply to see face to face persons whom they only knew from books. **Thus Pythagoras** visited the prophets of Memphis; and **Plato**, besides visiting Egypt and **Archytas of Tarentum**, most carefully explored that part of **the coast of Italy** which was formerly called **Great Greece**. **In this way the influential Athenian master** with whose lessons **the schools of the Academy** resounded became at once a pilgrim and a pupil, choosing modestly to learn what others had to teach rather than

over-confidently to propound views of his own. Indeed his pursuit of learning – which seemed to fly before him all the world over – finally led to **his capture by pirates** who sold him into slavery to a cruel tyrant. Thus he became a prisoner, a bondman, and a slave; yet, as he was always a philosopher, he was greater still than the man who purchased him. Again we read that certain noblemen journeyed from the most remote parts of Spain and Gaul to visit **Titus Livius** and listen to his eloquence, which flowed like a fountain of milk. Thus the fame of an individual had more power to draw men to Rome than the attractions of the city itself; and the age displayed an unheard-of and noteworthy portent in the shape of men who, entering the great city, bestowed their attention not upon it but upon something else. **Apollonius** too was a traveller – the one I mean who is called the sorcerer by ordinary people and the philosopher by such as follow Pythagoras. He entered Persia, traversed the Caucasus, and made his way through the Albanians, the Scythians, the Massagetae, and the richest districts of India. At last, **after crossing that wide river the Pison, he came to the Brahmans**. There he saw **Hiarcas sitting upon his golden throne** and **drinking from his Tantalus-fountain**, and heard him instructing **a few disciples** upon the nature, motions, and orbits of the heavenly bodies. After this he travelled among the Elamites, the Babylonians, the Chaldeans, the Medes, the Assyrians, the Parthians, the Syrians, the Phenicians, the Arabians, and the Philistines. Then returning to Alexandria he made his way to Ethiopia to see **the gymnosophists** and **the famous table of the sun** spread in the sands of the desert. Everywhere he found something to learn, and as he was always going to new places, he became constantly wiser and better. Philostratus has written the story of his life at length in eight books.

2 But why should I confine my allusions to the men of this world, when the apostle Paul, the chosen vessel, the Doctor of the Gentiles, who could boldly say: 'Do ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me?' knowing that he really had within him that greatest of guests – when even he **after visiting Damascus and Arabia** 'went up to Jerusalem to see Peter and abode with him fifteen days.' For he who was to be a preacher to the Gentiles had to be instructed **in the mystical numbers** seven and eight. And again fourteen years later he took Barnabas and Titus and communicated his gospel to the apostles lest by any means he should have run or had run in vain. **Spoken words** possess an indefinable **hidden power**, and teaching that passed directly from the mouth of the speaker into the ears of the disciples is more impressive than any other. When the speech of Demosthenes against Aeschines was recited before the latter during his exile at Rhodes, amid all the admiration and applause he sighed, **'If you could but have heard** the brute deliver his own periods!'

3 I do not adduce these instances because I have anything in me from which you either can or will learn a lesson, but to show you that your zeal and eagerness to learn – even though you cannot rely on help from me – are in themselves worthy of praise.

A mind willing to learn deserves commendation **even when it has no teacher**. What is of importance to me is not what you find but what you seek to find. Wax is soft and easy to mould even where **the hands of craftsmen and modeller are wanting** to work it. **It is already potentially all** that it can be made. The apostle Paul learned the law of Moses and the prophets **at the feet of Gamaliel** and was glad that he had done so, for armed with this spiritual armour, he was able to say boldly '**the weapons of our warfare** are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds;' armed with these we war 'casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; and being in a readiness to revenge all disobedience.' He writes to Timothy, who had been trained in the holy writings from a child, exhorting him to study them diligently and not to neglect the gift which was given him with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. To Titus he gives commandment that among a bishop's other virtues (which he briefly describes) he should be careful to seek a knowledge of the Scriptures: A bishop, he says, must hold fast 'the faithful word as he hath been taught that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.' In fact want of education in a clergyman prevents him from doing good to anyone but himself and much as the virtue of his life may build up Christ's church, he does it an injury as great by failing to resist those who are trying to pull it down. **The prophet Haggai** says – or rather the Lord says it by the mouth of Haggai – 'Ask now the priests concerning the law.' For **such is the important function of the priesthood** to give answers to those who question them concerning the law. And in Deuteronomy we read: '**Ask thy father** and he will show thee, thy elders and they will tell thee.' Also in the one hundred and nineteenth psalm: 'Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.' David too, in the description of the righteous man whom he compares to **the tree of life** in paradise, amongst his other excellences speaks of this: 'His delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law **doth he meditate** day and night.' In the close of his most solemn vision Daniel declares that 'the righteous shall shine as the stars; and the wise, that is the learned, as the firmament.' You can see, therefore, how great is the difference between righteous ignorance and instructed righteousness. Those who have the first are compared with the stars, those who have the second with the heavens. Yet, according to the exact sense of the Hebrew, both statements may be understood of the learned, for it is to be read in this way: 'They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever.' Why is the apostle Paul called a chosen vessel? Assuredly because he is a repertory of the law and of the holy Scriptures. The learned teaching of our Lord strikes the Pharisees dumb with amazement, and they are filled with astonishment to find that Peter and John know the law although they have not learned letters. For to these the Holy Ghost immediately suggested what comes to others by daily study and meditation; and, as it is written, they were 'taught of God.'

The Saviour had only accomplished his twelfth year when the scene in the temple took place; but when he interrogated the elders concerning the law his wise questions conveyed rather than sought information.

4 But perhaps we ought to call Peter and John ignorant, both of whom could say of themselves, 'though I be rude in speech, yet not in knowledge.' Was John a mere fisherman, rude and untaught? If so, whence did he get the words 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God'? *Logos* in Greek has many meanings. It signifies word and reason and reckoning and the cause of individual things by which those which are subsist. All of which things we rightly predicate of Christ. This truth Plato with all his learning did not know, of this Demosthenes with all his eloquence was ignorant. 'I will destroy,' it is said, 'the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.' The true wisdom must destroy the false, and, although the foolishness of preaching is inseparable from the cross, Paul speaks 'wisdom among them that are perfect, yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world that come to nought,' but he speaks 'the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world.' God's wisdom is Christ, for Christ, we are told, is 'the power of God and the wisdom of God.' He is the wisdom which is hidden in a mystery, of which also we read in the heading of the ninth psalm 'for the hidden things of the son.' In him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. He also who was hidden in a mystery is the same that was foreordained before the world. Now it was in the law and in the prophets that he was foreordained and prefigured. For this reason too the prophets were called seers, because they saw him whom others did not see. Abraham saw his day and was glad. The heavens which were sealed to a rebellious people were opened to Ezekiel. 'Open thou mine eyes,' saith David, 'that I may behold wonderful things out of thy law.' For 'the law is spiritual' and a revelation is needed to enable us to comprehend it and, when God uncovers his face, to behold his glory.

5 In the Apocalypse a book is shown sealed with seven seals, which if you deliver to one that is learned saying 'Read this,' he will answer you, 'I cannot, for it is sealed.' How many there are today who fancy themselves learned, yet the Scriptures are a sealed book to them, and one which they cannot open save through him who has the key of David, 'he that openeth and no man shutteth; and shutteth and no man openeth.' In the Acts of the Apostles the holy eunuch (or rather 'man,' for so the Scripture calls him) who when reading Isaiah is asked by Philip, 'Understandest thou what thou readest?' makes answer: 'How can I except some man should guide me?' To digress for a moment to myself, I am neither holier nor more diligent than this eunuch, who came from Ethiopia, that is, from the ends of the world, to the temple leaving behind him a queen's palace, and so great a lover of the law and of divine knowledge that he read the holy Scriptures even in his chariot. Yet although he had the book in his hand and took into his mind the words of the Lord, nay even

had them on his tongue and uttered them with his lips, he still knew not him, whom – not knowing – he worshipped in the book. Then Philip came and showed him Jesus, who was concealed beneath the letter. Wondrous excellence of the teacher! In the same hour the eunuch believed and was baptized; he became one of the faithful and a saint. He was no longer a pupil but a master; and he found more in the church's font there in the wilderness than he had ever done in the gilded temple of the synagogue.

6 These instances have been just touched upon by me (the limits of a letter forbid a more discursive treatment of them) to convince you that in the holy Scriptures you can make no progress unless you have a guide to show you the way. I say nothing of the knowledge of grammarians, rhetoricians, philosophers, geometers, logicians, musicians, astronomers, astrologers, physicians, whose several kinds of skill are most useful to mankind, and may be ranged under the three heads of **teaching, method, and proficiency**. I will pass to the less important crafts, which require manual dexterity more than mental ability. Husbandmen, masons, carpenters, workers in wood and metal, wool-dressers and fullers, as well as those artisans who make furniture and cheap utensils, cannot attain the ends they seek without instruction from qualified persons. As Horace says, 'Doctors alone profess the healing art / And none but joiners ever try to join.'

7 The art of interpreting the Scriptures is the only one of which all men everywhere claim to be masters. To quote Horace again, 'Taught or untaught we all write poetry.' The chatty old woman, the doting old man, and the wordy sophist, one and all take in hand the Scriptures, rend them in pieces and teach them before they have learned them. Some with brows knit and bombastic words balanced one against the other philosophize concerning the sacred writings among weak women. Others – I blush to say it – learn of women what they teach men; and as if even this were not enough, they boldly explain to others what they themselves by no means understand. I say nothing of persons who, like myself, have been familiar with secular literature before they have come to the study of the holy Scriptures. Such men when they charm the popular ear by the finish of their style suppose every word they say to be a law of God. They do not deign to notice what prophets and apostles have intended, but they adapt conflicting passages to suit their own meaning, as if it were a grand way of teaching – and not rather the faultiest of all – to misrepresent a writer's views and to force the Scriptures reluctantly to do their will. They forget that we have read **centos from Homer** and Virgil; but we never think of calling the Christless Maro a Christian because of his lines '**Now comes the virgin back** and Saturn's reign, / Now from high heaven comes a child newborn.' Another line might be addressed by the Father to the Son: '**Hail, only son, my might** and majesty.' And yet another might follow the Saviour's words on the cross: '**Such words he spake** and there transfixed remained.' But all this is puerile, and resembles the sleight of hand of a mountebank. It is idle to try to teach what you do not know, and – if I may speak with some warmth – it is worse still **to be ignorant of your ignorance**.

8 **Genesis, we shall be told, needs no explanation**; its topics are too simple – the birth of the world, the origin of the human race, the division of the earth, the confusion of tongues, and the descent of the Hebrews into Egypt! **Exodus, no doubt, is equally plain**, containing as it does merely an account of the ten plagues, the Decalogue, and sundry mysteries and divine precepts! The meaning of Leviticus is of course self-evident, although every sacrifice that it describes, nay more, every word that it contains – the description of Aaron's vestments and all the regulations connected with the Levites – are symbols of things heavenly! The Book of Numbers too – are not its very figures, and Balaam's prophecy, and the forty-two camping places in the wilderness so many mysteries? **Deuteronomy** also – that is, the second law or the foreshadowing of the law of the gospel – does it not, while exhibiting things known before, put old truths in a new light? So far the '**five words**' of the **Pentateuch**, with which the Apostle boasts his wish to speak in the church. Then, as for Job, that pattern of patience, what mysteries are there not contained in his discourses? **Commencing in prose**, the book soon glides into verse and at the end once more reverts to prose. By the way in which it lays down **propositions**, assumes postulates, adduces proofs, and draws inferences, it illustrates all the laws of logic. Single words occurring in the book are full of meaning. To say nothing of other topics, it prophesies the resurrection of men's bodies at once with more clearness and with more caution than anyone has yet shown. 'I know,' Job says, 'that my redeemer liveth, and that at the last day I shall rise again from the earth; and I shall be clothed again with my skin, and in my flesh shall I see God. Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another. This my hope is stored up in my own bosom.' I will pass on to Jesus the son of Nave – a type of the Lord in name as well as in deed – who crossed over Jordan, subdued hostile kingdoms, divided the land among the conquering people and who in every city, village, mountain, river, hill-torrent, and boundary which he dealt with marked out the spiritual realms of the heavenly Jerusalem, that is, of the church. In the book of Judges every one of the popular leaders is a type. Ruth the Moabitess fulfils the prophecy of Isaiah: 'Send thou a lamb, O Lord, as ruler of the land from the rock of the wilderness to the mount of the daughter of Zion.' Under the figures of Eli's death and the slaying of Saul, Samuel shows the abolition of the old law. Again in Zadok and in David he bears witness to the mysteries of the new priesthood and of the new royalty. The third and fourth books of Kings, called in Hebrew *Malachim*, give the history of the kingdom of Judah from Solomon to Jeconiah, and of that of Israel from Jeroboam the son of Nebat to Hoshea, who was carried away into Assyria. If you merely regard the narrative, the words are simple enough, but if you look beneath the surface at the hidden meaning of it, you find a description of the small numbers of the church and of the wars which the heretics wage against it. The twelve prophets, whose writings are compressed within the narrow limits of a single volume, have typical meanings far different from their literal ones. Hosea speaks many times of Ephraim, of Samaria, of

Joseph, of Jezreel, of a wife of whoredoms and of children of whoredoms, of an adulteress shut up within the chamber of her husband, sitting for a long time in widowhood and in the garb of mourning, awaiting the time when her husband will return to her. Joel the son of Pethuel describes the land of the twelve tribes as spoiled and devastated by the palmer-worm, the canker-worm, the locust, and the blight, and predicts that after the overthrow of the former people the Holy Spirit shall be poured out **upon God's servants** and handmaids; the same spirit, that is, which was to be poured out in **the upper chamber at Zion** upon the **one hundred and twenty believers**. These believers, rising by gradual and regular gradations **from one to fifteen**, form the steps to which there is a mystical allusion in the 'psalm of degrees.' Amos, although he is only 'a herdsman' from the country, 'a gatherer of sycamore fruit,' cannot be explained in a few words. For who can adequately speak of the three transgressions and the four of Damascus, of Gaza, of Tyre, of Idumaea, of Moab, of the children of Ammon, and in the seventh and eight place of Judah and of Israel? He speaks to the fat kine that are in the mountain of Samaria, and bears witness that the great house and the little house shall fall. **He sees now the maker** of the grasshopper, now the Lord, standing upon a wall daubed or made of adamant, now a basket of apples that brings doom to the transgressors, and now a famine upon the earth, 'not a famine of bread, or a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord.' Obadiah, whose name means the servant of God, thunders against Edom red with blood and against the creature born of earth. He smites him with the spear of spirit because of his continual rivalry with his brother Jacob. Jonah, fairest of doves, whose shipwreck shows in a figure the passion of the Lord, recalls the world to penitence and, while he preaches to Ninevah, announces salvation to all the heathen. **Micah the Morasthite a joint heir with Christ** announces the spoiling of the daughter of the robber and lays siege against her, because she has smitten the jawbone of the judge of Israel. Nahum, the consoler of the world, rebukes 'the bloody city' and when it is overthrown cries: 'Behold upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth good tidings.' **Habakkuk, like a strong and unyielding wrestler**, stands upon his watch and sets his foot upon the tower that he may contemplate Christ upon the cross and say: 'His glory covered the heavens and the earth was full of his praise. And his brightness was as the light; he had horns coming out of his hand: and there was the hiding of his power.' **Zephaniah, that is, the bodyguard** and knower of the secrets of the Lord, hears 'a cry from the fishgate, and a howling from the second, and a great crashing from the hills.' He proclaims 'howling to the inhabitants of the mortar; for all the people of Canaan are undone; all they that were laden with silver are cut off.' **Haggai, that is, he who is glad or joyful**, who has sown in tears to reap in joy, is occupied with the rebuilding of the temple. He represents the Lord (the Father, that is) as saying 'Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations, and he who is desired of all nations shall come.' **Zechariah, he that is mindful of his Lord**, gives us many

prophecies. He sees Jesus, 'clothed with filthy garments,' a stone with seven eyes, a candlestick all of gold with lamps as many as the eyes, and two olive-trees on the right side of the bowl and on the left. After he has described the horses, red, black, white, and grizzled, and the cutting off of the chariot from Ephraim and of the horse from Jerusalem he goes on to prophesy and predict a king who shall be a poor man and who shall sit 'upon a colt the foal of an ass.' **Malachi**, the last of all the prophets, speaks openly of the rejection of Israel and the calling of the nations. 'I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand. For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, my name is great among the Gentiles: and in every place incense is offered unto my name, and a pure offering.' As for Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, who can fully understand or adequately explain them? The first of them seems to compose not a prophesy but a gospel. The second speaks of a rod of an almond tree and of a seething pot with its face towards the north, and of a leopard which has changed its spots. He also goes **four times** through the alphabet in different metres. The beginning and ending of Ezekiel, the third of the four, are involved in so great obscurity that **like the commencement of Genesis** they are not studied by the Hebrews until they are thirty years old. Daniel, the fourth and last of the four prophets, having knowledge of the times and **being interested in the whole world**, in clear language proclaims the stone cut out of the mountain without hands that overthrows all kingdoms. David, who is **our Simonides**, Pindar, and Alcaeus, our Horace, our Catullus, and our **Serenus** all in one, sings of Christ to his lyre; and on a psaltery with ten strings **calls him from the lower world** to rise again. **Solomon, a lover of peace and of the Lord**, corrects morals, teaches nature, unites Christ and the church, and sings a sweet **marriage song** to celebrate that holy bridal. Esther, a type of the church, frees her people from danger and, after having slain Haman, whose name means iniquity, hands down to posterity a memorable day and a great feast. **The book of things omitted** or **epitome** of the old dispensation is of such importance and value that without it anyone who should claim to himself a knowledge of the Scriptures would make himself a laughing stock in his own eyes. Every name used in it, nay even the conjunction of the words, serves to throw light on narratives passed over in the books of Kings and upon questions suggested by the gospel. Ezra and Nehemiah, that is **the Lord's helper and his consoler**, are united **in a single book**. They restore the temple and build up the walls of the city. In their pages we see the throng of the Israelites returning to their native land, we read of priests and Levites, of Israel proper and of proselytes; and we are even told the several families to which the task of building the walls and towers was assigned. These references convey one meaning upon the surface, but another below it.

9 You see how, carried away by my love of the Scriptures, I have exceeded the limits of a letter yet have not fully accomplished my object. We have heard only what it is that we ought to know and to desire, so that we too may be able to say with the

psalmist: 'My soul breaketh out for the very fervent desire that it hath always unto thy judgments.' But the saying of Socrates about himself – **'this only I know that I know nothing'** – is fulfilled in our case also. The New Testament I will briefly deal with. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are the Lord's team of four, the true cherubim or store of knowledge. With them the whole body is full of eyes, they glitter as sparks, they run and return like lightning, their feet are straight feet, and lifted up, their backs also are winged, ready to fly in all directions. They hold together each by each and are interwoven one with another: like wheels within wheels they roll along and go whithersoever the breath of the Holy Spirit wafts them. The apostle Paul writes to seven churches (**for the eighth Epistle – that to the Hebrews** – is not generally counted in with the others). He instructs Timothy and Titus; he intercedes with Philemon **for his runaway slave**. Of him I think it better to say nothing than to write inadequately. The Acts of the Apostles seem to relate a mere unvarnished narrative descriptive of the infancy of the newly born church; but when once we realize that their author is Luke the physician whose praise is in the gospel, we shall see that all his words are medicine for the sick soul. The apostles James, Peter, John, and Jude have published seven Epistles at once spiritual and to the point, short and long, short that is in words but lengthy in substance, so that there are few indeed who do not find themselves in the dark when they read them. The Apocalypse of John has as many mysteries as words. In saying this I have said less than the book deserves. All praise of it is inadequate; manifold meanings lie hid in its every word.

10 I beg of you, my dear brother, to live among these books, to meditate upon them, to know nothing else, to seek nothing else. Does not such a life seem to you a foretaste of heaven here on earth? Let not the simplicity of the Scripture or the poorness of its vocabulary offend you; for these are due either to the faults of translators or else to deliberate purpose: for in this way it is better fitted for the instruction of an unlettered congregation, as the educated person can take one meaning and the uneducated another from one and the same sentence. I am not so dull or so forward as to profess that I myself know it, or that I can pluck upon earth the fruit which has its root in heaven, but I confess that I should like to do so. I put myself before the man who sits idle and, while I lay no claim to be a master, I readily pledge myself to be a fellow student. 'Every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.' Let us learn upon earth that knowledge which will continue with us in heaven.

11 I will receive you with open hands and – **if I may boast and speak foolishly like Hermagoras** – I will strive to learn with you whatever you desire to study. Eusebius who is here regards you with the affection of a brother; he has made your letter twice as precious by telling me of your sincerity of character, your contempt for the world, your constancy in friendship, and your love to Christ. The letter bears on its face (without any aid from him) your prudence and the charm of your style. Make haste then, I beseech you, and cut instead of loosing the hawser which prevents your

vessel from moving in the sea. The man who sells his goods because he despises them and means to renounce the world can have no desire to sell them dear. Count as money gained the sum that you must expend on your outfit. There is an old saying that **a miser** lacks as much what he has as what he has not. The believer has **a whole world** of wealth; the unbeliever has not a single farthing. Let us always live 'as having nothing and yet possessing all things.' Food and raiment, these are the Christian's wealth. If your property is in your own power, sell it: if not, cast it from you. 'If any man ... will take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.' **Of course**, you wish to defer action: unless – so you argue – unless I sell my goods piecemeal and with caution, Christ will be at a loss to feed his poor. Nay, he who has offered himself to God has given him everything once for all. The apostles did but forsake ships and nets. The widow cast but two brass coins into the treasury, and yet she shall be preferred before Croesus with all his wealth. He readily despises all things who reflects always that he must die.

Annotations

1 **at the beginning of our friendship** That this passage is corrupt is clear, for example, from the complete lack of agreement among the manuscripts. It should perhaps read like this: 'which though it comes at the beginning gives assurance of a fidelity already tried and new proofs of an old friendship.' Apparently Paulinus at the beginning of his letter had spoken of his close friendship with Jerome.[2] Although it was old he renewed it with fresh proofs. The catalogue of examples that follows seeks to prevent anyone from immediately claiming for himself a knowledge of Holy Scripture and to encourage a long period of learning before undertaking to teach.

Thus Pythagoras Valerius Maximus in book 8 and Diogenes in his life of that famous man mention the studies of Pythagoras.[3] While he was still a youth he went to Egypt, for Memphis is a city in Egypt, and there he gained a thorough knowledge of the literature and language of that country. Having at that time searched through the secret commentaries of the prophets of Memphis he learned what they had observed through countless ages. From there he moved on to Persia, where he absorbed all the teachings of its learned men. Then he sailed to Crete, and there with Epimenides he descended into the cave of Ida.[4] He also travelled to Lacedemonia in order to study its form of government and its institutions. After this he went down to the Olympic contest. Finally he came to Italy. For he had departed from his native Samos, which was now oppressed by tyranny.[5] He taught at Crotone and gave laws to the Italians.

Plato Valerius in the same book discusses Plato, as does Laertius in his life of the philosopher.[6] Poetry was the first art he had embraced, and after that he devoted himself to the study of philosophy. Following the death of Socrates, Cratylus and Hermogenes were his masters. At thirty-two he journeyed to Megara to study with Euclid the mathematician.[7] Afterwards he went to Cyrene, a city in Africa, according to Plutarch.[8] From there he went on to Italy to visit the Pythagoreans Philolaus and Eurytus. And then he journeyed to Egypt where he learned the secrets of the priests. Out of love of philosophy his travels would have continued longer, but he was forced by wars in Asia to return to Athens.

Archytas of Tarentum Valerius but not Laertius mentions this.[9] Archytas was a Pythagorean whose epitaph Horace wrote in one of his odes.[10] Plato studied with him at Tarentum. At Locri he studied with Timaeus, Arion, and Choetus.[11]

the coast of Italy That is, the boundary, since that part of Italy lies on the sea

Great Greece Valerius writes: 'He proceeded even to that part of Italy which then was called Greater Greece.'[12] And Pliny writes [that the Greeks passed judgment on that land] 'by calling a very small part of it Great Greece.'[13] It is clear however that the Italians there at one time had spoken Greek on account of the trading colonies of Greeks. And also we read that Hercules had come to that region.[14]

In this way the influential Athenian master Jerome seems to have followed Valerius here, for the latter writes: 'At the very time that studious young men went to Athens eagerly striving to get Plato as a teacher, he himself was traversing the impassable banks of the Nile and the most desolate fields and wandering through a vast foreign land and across its winding canals, a disciple of the old Egyptians.'[15]

the schools of the Academy [The Latin here is *Academiae gymnasia*, and Erasmus explains:] Plato's villa, far from the city, where he gave instruction was called the Academy. The places where wrestlers and similar athletes exercised are called *gymnasia*. Later on places where philosophers gathered were also called *gymnasia*. Γυμνάζειν in Greek means 'to exercise.'

his capture by pirates Neither Plutarch nor Laertius mention this occurrence. The story is told, however, that Plato had first come to Sicily to see the marvel of fiery Aetna.[16] There Dionysius summoned him for a discussion. His somewhat bold remarks deeply offended the tyrant, who made ready to put him to death, but moved by the entreaties of Dion he handed him over to Pollis, the ambassador of the

Lacedemonians, so that he might sell him into slavery. Pollis brought him to Aegina, where he sold him. But Aegina had a law that made it a capital offence if any Athenian came there, and so he stood trial for his life. He was acquitted, however, because a defender said that the law specified 'if any man,' whereas the accused was a philosopher. But he was ransomed by the money of friends and was sent back to Athens a free man. It is clear enough that Jerome is speaking about this episode when he adds: 'he was greater still than the man who purchased him.' But he may well have followed a historian who gave a somewhat different account, as so often happens.

A very humorous incident comes to mind with regard to this passage.[17] There is in London a certain English theologian, great in the opinion of many, the greatest in his own view. He is one of those who preach in public, a man by no means lacking in energy, and a member of the Franciscan faction.[18] I would divulge his name if I did not know that hungry for glory he greatly desires it. Although he has had nothing at all to do with good literature and has learned nothing whatsoever save some paltry Scotist syllogisms, and that also most unhappily, nevertheless he was astonished that there was anything in Jerome that was not understood by enlightened theologians. And when by chance I happened to mention this letter the man laughed at my preparing annotations on this work, which a certain Breton friar had explained so clearly in his commentaries.[19] When I was slow to recognize the name of this Breton he took pity on my ignorance for not being on familiar terms with so great an author. Indeed until then, dolt that I was, I had thought that this little commentary was the work of Lyra.[20] He began to ask earnestly what there was in that letter that anyone did not understand, let alone a theologian. I proposed what memory by chance at that point suggested to me – the passage about Hiarcas and the Tantalus-fountain.[21] Good heavens, how that fellow without delay unravelled the knot, actually inventing on the spot some extraordinary nonsense. I proposed another problem of some sort; with equal dexterity he solved it. I was astonished at the shamelessness of the man, though he believed that he was handling the matter like a great theologian. Now this petty discussion had taken place in a commercial inn and was more truly a drinking-bout than an exchange of views. As happens, an audience worthy of that rhetorician was surrounding us. I approved whatever he had said, for he was giving me great pleasure. What was I to do? His stupidity rendered refutation impossible. Finally, carried away by his great success, he began of his own accord to call attention to what he had observed in

that letter, lynx-eyed as he was. He stated that the reading 'he was greater still than the man who purchased him,' which was found in the manuscripts that commonly circulated, was wrong; it should read 'he was himself of greater mind.'[22] I was stupefied at such extraordinary acumen, and I thanked him for elucidating so abstruse a point. He ordered me to add this also as a little note to my annotations, and I promised that it would be done.

Some time later he happened to be at a banquet with some friends of mine, some of whom were men of renown, others men of learning, and my name came up. When he acknowledged that indeed he knew Erasmus he was asked what he thought of me. He responded most truthfully simply this: 'Erasmus does not know anything.' Nevertheless someone said: 'He is doing some kind of work on the writings of Jerome.' Then he replied: 'He is not getting anywhere, for Erasmus is a good enough Latinist, but in the case of Jerome he understands nothing at all.' 'How do you know?' someone interjected. 'I put him to the test myself,' he replied. 'We recently got into a discussion about a certain letter of St Jerome, and I had very much to tell him. I perceived that the man had absolutely no competence in those matters.' Amid the laughing and the murmuring of the others my good friend Mountjoy, a man witty without being biting and humorous rather than sarcastic, responded that he would have a hard time convincing him that there are in Jerome things which he understood and which Erasmus did not understand.[23] The fellow solemnly swore that such was the case. It seemed right to share this story with you, dear reader, for whatever pleasure it affords and at the same time to make good on the promise I made to the fellow.

Titus Livius Pliny in a letter to Nepos writes: 'Have you never read that a certain native of Cádiz, stirred by the reputation and fame of Titus Livius, had come from the far off ends of the earth to see him, and left immediately after he had seen him?'[24] Cádiz is in Spain.

Apollonius He means Apollonius of Tyana, who was a well-known figure living in the days of Claudius and Nero and until the time of Nerva.[25] The sophist Philostratus wrote of his travels and of his entire life, a work filled with the most trifling absurdities and extraordinary nonsense.[26] As a result Jerome doubts whether he should call him a sorcerer or a philosopher.

after crossing that wide river the Pison Jerome thinks that the Pison is the same river that authors call the Ganges, which is also in India and which flows into the Southern Ocean.[27] Nevertheless these authors locate the Brahmans in the Indian Ocean, leading you to believe that it is an island.

he came to the Brahmans The Brahmans are a people of India about whom authors report incredible things.[28] They live a most temperate life and have no four-footed animals, no agriculture, no iron, no homes, no fire, no gold, no silver, no bread, no wine, but in healthful air and on the sparsest diet of fruit and the purest water they live the longest lives possible in the strictest observance of piety and of justice. And there are very many other marvellous things to tell about them, but it is not to our purpose here to do so. We read that Alexander also had come to see them.

Hiarcas sitting upon his golden throne Philostratus in his *Life of Apollonius*, book 3, writes that among the Brahmans there are wise men whose leader, I believe, is called Hiarcas in their own language.[29] When Apollonius visited them this is how they received him. Hiarcas was sitting upon a bronze [*sic*] throne adorned with golden statues and greeted Apollonius by name. Below Hiarcas the others were sitting on humbler stools. Then after a philosophical disquisition Hiarcas showed Apollonius a statue inscribed with the name Tantalus, four cubits tall, in the likeness of a person holding out a cup in his hand.[30] A continuous flow of liquid trickled into it, yet never overflowed the cup. The Indian philosophers drink from the cup before retiring. Then lying on a grassy bed they take their rest. From the same cup they drink the health of anyone they receive in friendship.[31]

drinking from his Tantalus-fountain He calls the cup a fountain because in it there is always a great abundance of water, as if it gushed forth from a fountain. He calls it a Tantalus-fountain because the statue holding the cup bears the inscription Tantalus. The Brahmans think that he was the kindest of men.

a few disciples Apollonius reports that there were eighteen.

the gymnosophists Gymnosophists are a sect who live on the other side of the Indo-Scythians and are so called because they go naked in the forests; they are free from all the passions that corrupt the life of man. Concerning them also authors have reported marvellous things that have no relevance to this passage.[32]

the famous table of the sun The place is in Ethiopia, where indeed there is a certain meadow always filled with a great abundance of meat, which the magistrates put there at night so that anyone who wishes may approach after daybreak and feast on it. This led the people to think that that great quantity of food comes forth in the field through divine intervention. Accordingly the place is called *ἡλιοτράπεζα*, that is, the table of the sun. King Cambyses sent his

ambassadors to visit it. The authors who tell us about it are Herodotus in the third book, Solinus, and Pomponius Mela.[33]

2 **after visiting Damascus and Arabia** Paul himself narrates the following in the Epistle to the Galatians: 'But I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days.'[34] And a little later he writes: 'Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also. And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain.'[35]

in the mystical numbers Fifteen is made up of seven and eight. Seven has to do with the Jews and the Mosaic law, eight with the gospel. For the Jewish Sabbath was defined by seven days. The glory of the gospel and the repose of the resurrection came after it, and this is what the number eight signifies. So it is that there are three psalms bearing the inscription 'for the wine presses,' each of which has the mystical number eight, Psalms 8, 80, and 83.[36] And this is because under the dazzling glory of the gospel the wine presses of the Gentiles overflowed with new wine and the Sabbath of the Mosaic law was extended unto the eighth day. Hilary in his *Commentary on the Psalms* expresses pretty much this thought,[37] and therefore Jerome adds [to his quotation from Galatians]: 'For he who was to be a preacher to the Gentiles had to be instructed in the mystical numbers seven and eight.'

Spoken words [The Latin here is *viva vox* 'living voice.'] Thus they call not the written word which is lifeless, as it were, but the word proceeding from the lips of a teacher. Cicero in his *Tusculan Disputations* writes: 'However many models for imitation he may give them from the authors they are reading, it will still be found that fuller nourishment is provided by the living voice, as we call it, more especially when it proceeds from the teacher himself.'[38] And Pliny in one of his letters writes: 'Moreover the living voice, as is commonly said, has greater influence.'[39]

hidden power [Jerome's text has the Greek word *ἐνέργεια*, and Erasmus explains:] When *ἐνέργεια* is written with an *ε* it means 'power' and 'efficacy.' It is from *ἐνεργέω*, that is, 'I act' or 'I accomplish something in some way.' When it is written *ἐνάργεια* it means 'vividness.'[40]

If you could but have heard Pliny relates this anecdote in a letter to Nepos in these words: 'Unless in fact we think false that well-known remark of Aeschines, who, when he had read the speech of Demosthe-

nes to the Rhodians and all were in admiration of it, is reported to have added 'If you could but have heard the brute himself!'[41]

3 **even when it has no teacher** [Erasmus' lemma for this annotation reads 'even when it has no author,' although the actual text of Jerome's letter reads 'even when it has no teacher.' Erasmus explains:] Other manuscripts have 'even when it has no teacher.'

the hands of craftsmen and modeller are wanting [The Latin term Jerome uses for modeller is *plastes*, and Erasmus explains the cognate Greek words:] Πλάττω is Greek for 'I mould,' and πλάστης is one who moulds from material such as clay, wax, plaster, and the like. The art is called πλάστικη, that is, the plastic art.

It is already potentially all [Jerome's Latin here reads '*tamen virtute totum est*,' and Erasmus points out that Jerome is using *virtus* as the Greeks use δύναμις.] The locution is half Greek, for the Greeks use the word δύναμις, that is, power, when it is not an action already performed but one that can be done. For example, the tiny seed *potentially* is a great tree.

at the feet of Gamaliel Concerning this one reads in Acts, chapter 5: 'Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, held in reputation among all the people.'[42] Paul was his disciple, as he himself testifies in Acts, chapter 22: 'I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers.'[43]

the weapons of our warfare The quotation is from 2 Corinthians, chapter 10.[44] The Vulgate edition however differs somewhat from Jerome's words.

The prophet Haggai[45] Thus we read in Malachi, chapter 2: 'For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts.'[46]

such is the important function of the priesthood He calls a bishop a priest, for at one time only bishops were called priests [*sacerdotes*] and also elders [*presbyteri*]. Then when they had begun to be more numerous the leader of all was called a priest and a bishop and the others were called elders. It is perfectly clear from this passage that the proper function of a bishop is to teach the people not Scotist subtleties but Christ and the scriptural mysteries. And he who assumes for himself the title of supreme pontiff must be supreme in what is his highest function. But nowadays very many assign the most important tasks of the bishop to the vilest individuals while they take upon themselves the meanest tasks, involving themselves in lawsuits and

managing their properties. And not to appear to offer nothing at all that is sacred to the people they raise their hand in a blessing.

Ask thy father He believes the bishop to be a father. Indeed bishops ought to be fathers, not lords. Fathers turn over all their possessions to their sons. Lords use and abuse those who serve them for their own advantage. Those who are older however he calls elders, for in Greek πρεσβύτερος means one who is older.[47]

the tree of life 'And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, etc.'[48]

doth he meditate That is, he will exercise himself, for that is the meaning of both the Latin *meditari* and the Greek μελετᾶν.

6 **teaching, method, and proficiency** The Greek is lacking in this passage. We have restored it from traces in the old manuscripts as follows: τὸ δόγμα, τὴν μέθοδον, τὴν ἐμπειρίαν, that is, doctrine, method, and experience.[49]

7 **centos from Homer** The Latins call a garment sewn together from pieces of cloth of various colours a *cento*, the Greeks κέντρων. The Latins take the ρ out of the word. Whence also we call a poem made up of various scraps of verse patched together from here and there a cento. Such is Ausonius' *Cento nuptialis*, carefully put together from fragments of Virgil's poems.[50] There is also extant a cento of Proba,[51] and there is a Homeric cento with a similar theme. I think however that the reading should not be 'centos from Homer' but 'centros from Homer and Virgil.' For since this type of composition is Greek it ought to keep the Greek word, and that has a ρ. Nevertheless in the *Suidas* and in the Greek *Etymologicum* we read ὁμηρόκεντρα not ὁμηροκέντρωνες, but perhaps wrongly. Moreover it is characteristic of this genre to twist the authors' words into a very different meaning. For example, Virgil's line about the dead, 'It is not right for the pure to tread the accursed threshold,'[52] Ausonius twists to mean sexual intercourse and female pudenda. Anyone wishing to become acquainted with the rules for this kind of poetry should read Ausonius' preface to his cento.[53]

Now comes the virgin back These words some apply to Mary the virgin mother of Christ,[54] and St Augustine believed that the Holy Spirit had spoken truth through hostile mouths.[55] Here, however, Virgil is thinking of Erigone and has recounted a prophecy of the Sybil. The passage is in the *Bucolics*.[56]

Hail, only son, my might This passage is from the first book of the *Aeneid*.[57] Venus addresses her son Cupid with these words. Some attempt stupidly to make them refer to the eternal Father and his Son Jesus.

Such words he spake The words are Aeneas' in the second book of Virgil's *Aeneid*.[58] Some adapt them to Christ hanging on the cross.

to be ignorant of your ignorance [The Latin text is *ne hoc quidem scire quod nescias*, and Erasmus explains:] In this passage *quod* is a conjunction. It is as if he might say: 'not to know that you do not know.' Jerome alludes to Socrates, who was accustomed to say that only this he knew that he knew nothing.[59]

8 **Genesis ... needs no explanation** Jerome's words here must not be taken literally but as ironic, for no part of Holy Scripture is more difficult than Genesis because of the profundity of its mysteries. This is so true that at one time the Jews permitted only those more advanced in age to read this book.

Exodus ... is equally plain This also was said ironically,[60] as was the following sentence.

Deuteronomy Jerome has explained the Greek term. Δεύτερος means 'second' or 'next in order,' νόμος means 'law.'

So far Moses[61] Moses is thought to be the author of these five books [that is, of the Pentateuch].

'five words' Here Jerome gives some meaning to the words of Paul. In the First Letter to the Corinthians, chapter 14, the Apostle declares that in church he prefers to speak very few words so that his listeners might be edified rather than ten thousand that he alone understands and that are useful in the edification of no one.[62] Yet today a horde of priests set great store by their own words, which even they who pronounce them do not understand.

Pentateuch Πέντε is five, τεῦχος is book, for this part comprises five books.

Commencing in prose The beginning and end of Job have been composed as prose, the work itself consists of a poem.

propositions etc A rhetorical syllogism consists of these parts.[63] The proposition is where they set forth what they mean to prove. The minor premise [*assumptio*], which some call the reason, is where they give proof of the proposition. The confirmation strengthens the reason with further arguments. The conclusion repeats the proposition as if it has now been proved. Some embellish the confirmation and enrich both the reason and the confirmation with examples. Jerome then in this passage examines rhetorically what the dialecticians in their fashion discuss more insipidly.

upon God's servants For thus we read in Joel, chapter 2: 'And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.'[64]

the upper chamber at Zion The Holy Spirit was sent to Jerusalem, and

the city was established on Mount Zion, as Isaiah testifies.[65] Moreover, Jerome chose to say the upper chamber at Zion in order to allude to an ascent. For Zion is a mountain, and in Latin the word signifies a watch-tower. Finally, in the psalms of the fifteen steps Zion is mentioned by name:[66] 'They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion.'[67] Thus you may understand that this upper chamber has signified that height to which one ascends by the fifteen steps of perfection.

one hundred and twenty believers For such was the number that gathered after the ascension of Christ, as Luke narrates in the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles.[68] The place was still being shown in Jerusalem during the lifetime of Jerome.

from one to fifteen This reading in my opinion is somewhat suspect. Perhaps originally it had been 'from the bottom to the top.' For the dining-room is referred to as the upper chamber, itself some distance from the ground. Therefore since one ascends to that upper room by steps Jerome has added here a reference to the mystical fifteen steps in the psalms, which signify the ascent of the pious as they gradually progress from the bottom to the top.[69]

He sees now the maker For thus we read in Amos, chapter 7: 'Behold, he formed grasshoppers in the beginning of the shooting up.'[70]

Micah the Morasthite a joint heir with Christ Moresheth is a village near Eleutheropolis, a city in Palestine, where the prophet Micah was born, as Jerome writes in the preface to his commentaries on Micah.[71] Hence he calls himself a Morasthite. Further, Moresheth in the Hebrew language means 'heir.'[72] Hence St Jerome at the same time alludes both to the Hebrew word and to what Paul wrote in Romans, chapter 8: 'heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.'[73]

Habakkuk, like a strong and unyielding wrestler For Habakkuk in Hebrew means all of this.[74]

Zephaniah, that is the bodyguard For Zephaniah in Hebrew means 'the watch-tower of the Lord' or 'knower of the secrets of the Lord.'

Haggai, that is he who is glad or joyful Jerome here also alludes to the Hebrew word which means in their language 'glad' and 'joyful.'[75]

Zechariah, he that is mindful of his Lord Zechariah in Hebrew is 'the remembrance of the Lord.'[76] The authority is Jerome in his commentary on this book.[77]

Malachi More obscurely, to be sure, but nevertheless here also he seems to allude to the meaning of the Hebrew word. Malachi means 'the angel of the Lord' or 'one announcing the Lord,' for that is the role of an angel, publicly to announce Christ.

four times This has to do with the Book of Lamentations. Since it

cannot be explained in a few words, however, whoever wishes to know more about it should read Jerome's preface to the Lamentations of Jeremiah.[78]

like the commencement of Genesis Because many things in it seem very much like fables unless they are studied by a prepared mind

they That is, the beginning and ending of Ezekiel

being interested in the whole world This passage is undoubtedly corrupt. Some think the reading ought to be 'a very learned man' [*polyhistor*], for that epithet had been added to the name of Appio, the grammarian who wove together the history of each nation, according to Aulus Gellius, book 5, chapter 14,[79] or surely 'very learned' [*polyhistoris*], not to depart too far from Scripture.[80] *Polyhistor*, or *polyhistoros*, is Greek for one who knows and recounts many things, for he previously said: 'having knowledge of the times.' I find the reading *philistoros*, that is, 'eager for knowledge,' especially pleasing, for in Daniel, chapter 9, the prophet heard Gabriel say 'thou art a man of ardent desires.'[81]

our Simonides Since David wrote psalms in lyric verse and sang those written by others Jerome recounts the lyric poets of the pagans, and to distinguish him from them he calls David 'our Simonides.'[82]

Serenus He was the tutor of the younger Gordian.[83] Macrobius mentioned him in his life of Caracalla and in the third book of his *Saturnalia*.[84] It is reported that even today some of his poems are extant. The rest are well-known lyric poets.

calls him from the lower world He alludes to the words in Psalm 56: 'Awake up, my glory; awake, psaltery and harp: I myself will awake early.'[85]

Solomon, a lover of peace For this is what the name means in Hebrew.

and of the Lord For Jedidiah, the name conferred on Solomon by Nathan, as we read in 2 Kings 12, means this in Hebrew.[86]

marriage song [Jerome's term is *epithalamium*.] That is, a marriage song. Jerome refers to the Mystical Canticle.[87]

The book of things omitted [Jerome uses the Septuagint and Vulgate title *Paralipomenon*, and Erasmus explains:] In Greek the word means 'things omitted' or 'passed over.'[88]

epitome [The word in Jerome and Erasmus is Greek] That is, a compendium or abridgement

the Lord's helper and his consoler Again he is explaining the Hebrew names.

in a single book Among the Hebrews the words of Ezra and Nehemiah

are united in a single book, as Jerome tells us in his preface to Ezra, where what is reported in third and fourth books he calls nonsense.[89] Thus the Hebrews unite the first two books and reject the remaining two.

9 **this only I know that I know nothing** He expresses the view of Socrates ambiguously. *Quod* here is a conjunction, not a pronoun.[90] The sense is this: 'this only I know that I do not know.'

for the eighth Epistle – that to the Hebrews In another place he said that the Epistle to the Hebrews is not accepted by the Latins as the Apocalypse is not accepted by the Greeks.[91] Now the church openly embraces both.

for his runaway slave That is, for Onesimus[92]

11 **If I may boast and speak foolishly like Hermagoras** [Erasmus discusses two possible readings in the text: *tumiditas* 'boasting,' or *timiditas* 'timidity.'] Some manuscripts have 'boasting.' Either meaning is supportable. Hermagoras was a rhetorician whom Cicero cites several times in his *De inventione*.[93]

a miser The saying is Seneca's. It is the only one Gellius cites as a witty expression.[94]

a whole world World [*mundus*] here means goods that have been laid up.[95] Whence we also speak of *mundus muliebris*, that is, the accessories of a woman. He used the word *totus* 'whole' for *integer* 'complete.'

Of course *Scilicet* 'of course' is used here ironically.

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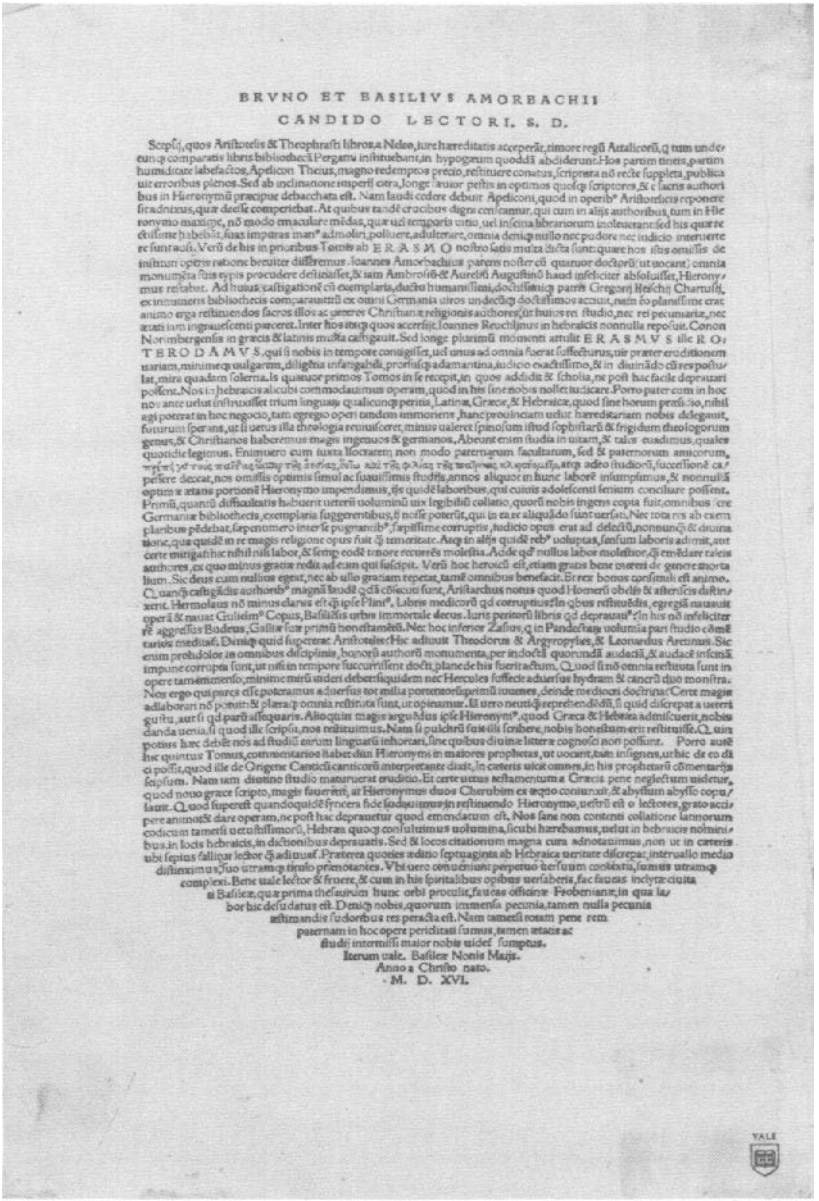
THE AMERBACHS' PREFACES TO VOLUME V OF THE EDITION OF ST JEROME

The following two prefaces addressed to the reader by the Amerbach brothers appear in volume v of the edition of Jerome. The first and very short one is on the title-page under the descriptive title; the second, which bears the name of Bruno and Basilius Amerbach, is on the title-page verso. Their ascription to the Amerbachs is questioned by P.S. Allen,[1] though the personal references and tone in the second preface would seem to warrant the attribution at least in that case. The statements are particularly interesting because of the light they shed on the initiation and the preparation of the edition and on the role of Erasmus and others in the enterprise. Similar information is contained in Erasmus' dedicatory preface to Archbishop Warham and in Beatus Rhenanus' life of Erasmus.[2] A fuller story, however, is told here. The account is marked by the querulous tone of the Amerbachs and their complaints about their exertions in this venture as well as by their expressions of deference and high regard for Erasmus, whose name throughout appears in capitals.

We are not unaware that among these writings there are very many falsely ascribed to Jerome. Although we had some suspicions of this even before merely from the style, we did not dare to trust our own judgment until DESIDERIUS ERASMUS, a man of the surest discernment, should make a pronouncement about them in which we could put our full trust. Nevertheless we excluded none of those works which had previously been printed. As a matter of fact we even added many writings, catering thereby not to our own inclinations but to popular taste and to the desires of some whose strong representations we did not wish to oppose. We would have preferred fewer volumes and more genuine ones. The learned, refined as they are, will take in good part our refusal to engage in fruitless contention with most of mankind. And again, they will not be angry with us for warning the reader against being unwittingly deceived. We have done enough for both parties. Those who without distinction find everything acceptable which bears the name of Jerome have even more from us than they have received hitherto from anyone, and what they have received is more correct. The knowledgeable will not be deceived by any attributions unless they want to be deceived, for each of these works has been marked off and identified in the *censurae* and the index of our friend ERASMUS.



BRVNO ET BASILIVS AMORBACHII

CANDIDO LECTORI. S. D.

Scepti, quos Aristotelis & Theophrasti libros a Nelео, iure hæreditatis acceperãt, timore regũ Attalicorũ, q tum undeeunq; comparatis libris bibliothecã Pergami instituebant, in hypogæum quoddã abdiderunt. Hos partim tinitis, partim humiditate labefactos, Apellicon Theius, magno redemptos pretio, restituere conatus, scripsera nõ recte suppleta, publicauit erroribus plenos. Sed ab inclinatione imperti extra, longe fuisse potius in optimos quosq; scriptores, & è sacris authoribus in Hieronymũ præcipue debacchata est. Nam laudi cedere debuit Apellicoti, quod in operib⁹ Aristotelis reponere studuisset, quæ deesse comperiebat. At quibus tandẽ oraculis digna censemur, qui cum in aliis authoribus, tum in Hieronymo maxime, nõ modo emaculare mẽdas, quæ uel temporis uitio, uel inscitia librariorum inoleuerant: sed his quæ desiderabilissime habebãt, suas impuras man⁹ admoliri, polluere, adulterare, omnia denique nullo nec pudore nec iudicio immutare ac funditus. Verũ de his in proximis Tomis ab ERASMO nostro satis multa dicta sunt: quare hos ipse omissis de instituti operis ratione breuiter differemus. Ioannes Amorbachius parens noster cũ quatuor doctorũ, ut uocant, omnia monumẽta suis expis procudere destinasset, & iam Ambrosiũ & Aurelium Augustinũ haud infeliciter absoluisset, Hieronymus relabitur. Ad huius castigationẽ cũ exemplaria, ductu humanissimi, doctissimiq; patris Gregorij Heschij Charusij, ex innumeris bibliothecis comparauissẽ ex omni Germania uiros undecũq; doctissimos accuit, nam eo planissime erat animo erga restituendos sacros illos ac ueteres Christianæ religionis authores, ut huius rei studio, nec rei pecuniariæ, nec ætati iam ingraueſcenti parceret. Inter hos itaq; quos accersiit, Ioannes Reuchlinus in hebraicis nonnulla reposuit. Conon Norimbergensis in græcis & latinis multa castigauit. Sed longe plurimũ momenti attulit ERASMVS ille ROTERODAMVS, qui si nobis in tempore contigisset, uel unus ad omnia fuerat sufficẽturus, uir præter eruditionem uariam, minime q; uulgarem, diligẽtia insuperabili, prorsus q; adamantina, iudicio exactissimo, & in diuinãdo cẽ responsu fel, mira quadam sollertia. Is quatuor primos Tomos in se recepit, in quos addidit & Scholia, ne posti hac facile depraui posſent. Nos i⁹ hebraicis alcubi commodauimus operam, quod in his sine nobis nollet iudicare. Porro pater cum in hoc nos ante uelut instituisset trium linguarũ, qualiumcũq; peritis, Latini, Græce, & Hebraicæ, quod sine horum præsidio, nihil agi poterat in hoc negocio, tam egregio operi tandem immoriens, hanc prouinciam uelut hæreditariam nobis delegauit, futurum sperans, ut si uerus ille theologia restituꝛetur, minus ualeret pinsorum istud sophistarũ & frigidum theologorum genus, & Christianos haberemus magis ingenuos & germanos. Abeunt enim studia in uitam, & tales exadimus, quales quotidie legimus. Enimuero cum iuxta Hocratem non modo parentum facultatem, sed & parentorum amicorum, πειρᾶσθαι χρὴ τοὺς παῖδας ἔτι ὄντας, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν φίλων τῶν πατρικῶν κτῆσασθαι, atq; adeo studiorũ, successionẽ cupere decerat, nos omissis optimis simul ac suauissimis studijs annos aliquot in hunc laborẽ insumpsimus, & nonnullis optimæ ætatis portionibus Hieronymo impendimus, ijs quidẽ laboribus, qui cuiuis adoleſcenti seniũ conciliare possent. Primũ, quanq; difficultatis habuerit ueterũ uoluminũ uix legibilis collatio, quorũ nobis ingens copia fuit, omnibus cre Germaniæ bibliothecis, exemplaria suggerentibus, si nosse poterũt, qui in ea re aliquãdo fuisse uerſati. Nec tota res ab exemplaribus pẽdebat, sæpenumero inter se pugnantib⁹, sæpissime corruptis, iudicio opus erat ad delectũ, nonnunq; & diuinatione, quæ quidẽ in re magis religiosa opus fuit q; temeritate. Acq; in alijs quidẽ reb⁹ uoluptas, si non laboris adimit, aut certe mitigat hic nihil nisi labor, & semp eodẽ tenore recurrẽs molestia. Adde q⁹ nullus labor molestior, q; emẽdare taleis authores, ex quo minus gratiæ redit ad eum qui suscipit. Verũ hoc heroicũ est, etiam gratis bene mereri de genere mortalium. Sic deus cum nullius egeat, nec ab ullo gratiam repetat, tamẽ omnibus benefacit. Et rex bonus tantundẽ est animo. Q. uanq; castigatis authorib⁹ magna laudẽ q̃dã cõsecuti sunt, Aristarchus noster quod Homeri obelos & asteriscos distinxerit. Hermolaus nõ minus clarus est q; ipse Plin⁹, Libris medicorũ qd corruptissimis q̃bus restituẽdis, egregiã nauarit operã & nauat Guilelm⁹ Copus, Basilicis urbis immortale decus. Iuris periti libris qd depraui⁹ q̃n his nõ infeliciter sẽ opposſus Budæus, Gallicæ suæ primũ non ettamsẽsi. Nec hoc inferior Zasius, q in Pandectas uoluminis pari studio cõmẽtarios meditasse, Denicq quid fugeremur Aristotelis? Hic adiuuat Theodorus & Argyropylus, & Leonardus Aretinus. Sic enim prohdolor in omnibus disciplinis, honorũ authorũ monumenta, per indoctã quorundã audaciã, & audaciã insanã impune corrupta sunt, ut nisi in tempore succurrisset docti, planè de his fuerit actum. Q. uod si nõ omnia restituta sunt in opere tam immenso, minime mirũ uideri debet: siquidem nec Hercules sufficere aduersus hydram & cancrũ quo monstra. Nos ergo qui parua esse poteramus aduersus tot milia portentorũ, primũ iouenes, deinde mediocri doctrina. Certe magis adlaborari nõ potuit: & plæraq; omnia restituta sunt, ut opinamur. Et utro neutri q; reprehendẽdi, si quid dilcrepat a ueteri gustu, aut si qd parũ affequatur. Absoquin magis arguẽdus ipse Hieronym⁹, quod Græca & Hebraa admiscuerit, nobis danda uenia, si quod ille scripsit, nos restituimus. Nam si pulcherũ fuit illi scribere, nobis honestum erit restituisse. Q. uin potius hæc debẽ nos ad studiũ eorum linguarũ inhortari, sine quibus diuinæ litteræ cognosci non possunt. Porro aute hic quintus Tomus, commentarios habet diui Hieronymi in maiores prophetas, ut uocant, tam insignes, ut hic de eo dici possit, quod ille de Origene Canticũ canticorũ interpretante dixit, in ceteris uicit omnes, in his prophetarũ cõmentarijs seipsum. Nam tam diuinos studio maturuerat eruditio. Et certe uetus testamentum a Græcis pene neglectum uidetur, quod nouo græce scripto, magis fauerint, ut Hieronymus duos Cherubim ex aequo coniunxit, & abyssum abyssо copulauit. Q. uod superest quandoquidẽ syncera fide laboratum in restituendo Hieronymo, uestrũ est o lectores, grato animo accipere animos & dare operam, ne posſt hac depraui quod emendatum est. Nos sane non contenti collatione latinorum codicum tametsi uetustissimorũ, Hebræi quoq; consulendos uoluimus, siquibus hæc hebraica, uelut in hebraicis nõnullis locis hebraicis, in dictionibus depraua. Sed & locos citationum magna cura adnotauimus, non ut in ceteris ubi sepius fallitur lector q̃ adiuuat. Præterea quosdã adhuc septuaginta ab Hebraica ueritate discrepat, interualla media distinximus, suo utrumq; titulo prænotatos. Vbi uero omnia in perpetuo uerſum contexta, tamen utrumq; complexi. Bene uale lector & fruere, & cum in his spiritalibus opibus uersaberis, fac faueas inclytæ ciuitati Basileæ, quæ prima thesaurum hunc orbi protulit, fauoras officinæ Frobenianæ, in qua labor hic defunctus est. Denicq nobis, quorum immensa pecunia, tamen nulla pecunia æstimandis sudoribus res peracta est. Nam tametsi totam pene rem paternam in hoc opere periclitati sumus, tamen ætatis ac studii intermissi maior nobis uidet sumptus.

Iterum uale. Basileæ Nonis Majis.

Anno a Christo nato.

M. D. XVI.

YALE

Hieronymi opera v (Basel: Froben 1516) title-page verso
Preface to the reader by Bruno and Basilius Amerbach
The Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library,
Yale University

GREETINGS FROM BRUNO AND BASILIUS AMERBACH TO THE WELL-DISPOSED READER

The people of Scepsis had received from Neleus by right of inheritance the books of Aristotle and Theophrastus, and because of their fear of the kings of the house of Attalus, who at that time were building the library at Pergamum and were collecting books from every quarter, they hid them in a kind of underground vault.[3] These books were badly damaged, partly by worms, partly by dampness. Apellicon Theius acquired them at a high price and attempted to restore them, but since the texts were incorrectly repaired they were published full of errors. But after the decline of the Empire a far fiercer plague raged against all the best authors and the sacred writers, especially against Jerome. Now Apellicon ought to have won praise for his efforts in replacing what he found missing in the works of Aristotle. But what tortures do they rightly deserve who in the case of other authors, but especially in the case of Jerome, dared not only to remove errors that had grown into the text either because of the ravages of time or the ignorance of copyists but also to lay their impure hands on what was absolutely correct, to pollute and adulterate it, and finally without shame or judgment to change everything for the worst? Our dear friend ERASMUS has said quite enough about these men in earlier volumes, so we will pass over those individuals and briefly discuss the plan for the work that has been undertaken.

It was the intention of our father Johann Amerbach to print all the extant works of the four Doctors, as they are called. He had already completed, not unhappily, editions of Ambrose and Augustine. Jerome was still to be done.[4] For the correction of the latter's text he procured copies of Jerome's works from innumerable libraries under the guidance of the most cultured and learned Carthusian Gregor Reisch. Then from every part of Germany he summoned the best scholars. He was very clearly so disposed towards the restoration of those sacred and ancient writers of the Christian faith that out of zeal for this project he spared neither expense nor himself as the burdens of age increased. Thus among those scholars he had summoned Johann Reuchlin restored much of the Hebrew, and Kuno of Nürnberg made many corrections in the Greek and the Latin.[5] But the distinguished ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM exerted by far the greatest influence. If he had come to us at the right time, he alone would have sufficed for every task, for he is a man who over and above a varied and far from commonplace learning is marked by a tireless and inflexible diligence, a most exact judgment, and when the matter demands what we might call remarkable intuitive skill. He

made the first four volumes his responsibility, to which he also added annotations to forestall easy corruption of the text. We lent a hand wherever there was Hebrew, because on these matters he was unwilling to make judgments without us. Our father in fact had earlier provided us for this purpose, as it were, with some proficiency in the three languages, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. Without their help this project would have been impossible.

At length in the midst of an undertaking so important he died,[6] bequeathing to us as his legacy the duty of completing it. He had entertained the hope that if the splendid theology of ancient times should come to life again that prickly and frigid kind of sophistical theology would have less influence, and our Christians would be more generous and genuine. For studies become the stuff of life, and our character is the result of what we daily read. And indeed since according to Isocrates it is fitting for children to succeed not only to their father's resources but also to his friends and even to his pursuits,[7] we put aside those most delightful studies in the liberal arts, and we spent several years on this project, and devoted a good portion of our best years to Jerome, to those labours indeed which make an old man out of a young one. First, those who have been engaged in this undertaking at one time or another will be in a position to know the great difficulty there is in collating ancient books that are scarcely legible and of which we had a huge number, since nearly all the libraries of Germany supplied copies. Nor was the whole problem a matter of copies that often contradicted one another and very often were corrupt; judgment was needed in making choices, sometimes even intuition, and indeed in this enterprise meticulous care has been more necessary than undue haste. In other endeavours pleasure eliminates the sense of toil; here it was toil and toil alone, and the same annoyances were always recurring. Besides, no toil is more troublesome than emending ancient authors, a task from which too little credit redounds to the man who undertakes it. But it is the role of a hero to deserve well of mankind even without reward. Thus God, although he has need of no one and demands gratitude from no one, nevertheless bestows his blessings on all. And a good king is of a similar mind.

Yet some have gained considerable recognition by their emendation of texts. Aristarchus won attention by annotating Homer with obelisks and asterisks,[8] and Ermolao is no less famous than Pliny himself.[9] What are more corrupt than books on medicine? In restoring them Guillaume Cop, the immortal glory of Basel, made and still makes an outstanding contribution.[10] What texts are more debased than the books of the jurists? Budé, the chief ornament of his native France, with no lack of success has undertaken the task they present.[11] Nor is Zasius, who with equal devotion is planning commentaries on the *Pandects*, inferior to him.[12] Finally, what has survived

of Aristotle? Here Theodorus as well as Argyropoulos and Leonardo Aretino have been of service.[13] For, alas, in every discipline the works that have come down to us of good authors have with impunity been corrupted through the ignorant presumption and the presumptuous stupidity of certain men, so that if the learned had not come to the rescue in the nick of time it would have been all over with these authors. But if the restoration of these texts has not been completed – the task is so enormous – this should cause very little surprise. For not even Hercules was strong enough in his contest with two monsters, the hydra and the crab.[14] How then could we, first as young men and then with only average learning, meet the challenge of so many thousands of monsters? Certainly no greater effort could have been made, and in our opinion nearly everything has been restored. Moreover, we should by no means be blamed if there is any departure from the old way or if you, the reader, sometimes fail to understand. In general Jerome himself ought rather to be censured for having mixed in Greek and Hebrew, and indulgence accorded us if we have restored what the saint wrote. For it will be our honour to restore what it was his glory to write. And indeed these works ought to give us a stronger incentive to study those languages without which Holy Scripture cannot be studied and understood.

Further, this fifth volume contains the commentaries of St Jerome on the major prophets, as they are called.[15] These commentaries are so outstanding that it can be said of Jerome what he himself said about Origen and his commentary on the Song of Songs: In his other works he has surpassed everyone, in these commentaries on the prophets he has surpassed himself.[16] For his learning had already matured with prolonged study. And indeed the Old Testament seems almost to have been neglected by the Greeks since they were more inclined to the New, written as it was in Greek. But Jerome joined the two cherubim together on an equal footing and united deep to deep.

Furthermore, since we have laboured in good faith in restoring Jerome it is your duty, dear reader, to accept our efforts with a grateful heart and to strive to prevent the corrected text from being corrupted in the future. Indeed we have not been content with the collation of the Latin manuscripts, however ancient; we have also consulted Hebrew texts, whenever we were at a loss, as in the case of Hebrew names, Hebrew places, and corrupt expressions. But also we have noted with great care the sources of citations, not as in other editions where the reader is more frequently led astray than helped. Besides, whenever the Septuagint text is at variance with the Hebrew original we have printed them in separate columns and given each its own heading. But where they agree we have given a single version in a continuous text.

Now we take leave of you, dear reader, and wish you joy. When you are reflecting on these spiritual riches be sure you think with favour of the famous city of Basel, which first brought to light this treasure for the world, and think with favour of the Froben publishing house, where this arduous labour took place. Finally, have favourable thoughts of us, whose enormous expenditure of money brought this undertaking to completion, yet the money was nothing compared to our exertions. For although in this work we put at risk nearly our entire patrimony, nevertheless the cost in years and interrupted study, we think, was greater. Once more farewell.

Basel, 7 May 1516

Notes

Introduction

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1 Parts of this introduction have appeared in 'Erasmus and Saint Jerome: The Close Bond and Its Significance' *Erasmus of Rotterdam Yearbook* 7 (1987) 33–53.
2 Cf Rice; John M. McManamon 'Pier Paolo Vergerio (the Elder) and the Beginnings of the Humanist Cult of Jerome' *The Catholic Historical Review* 71 (1985) 353–71; M. Meiss 'Scholarship and Penitence in the Early Renaissance: the Image of St Jerome' in *The Painter's Choice: Problems in the Interpretation of Renaissance Art* (New York 1976) 189–202; D. Russo *Saint Jérôme en Italie, étude d'iconographie et de spiritualité (XIIIe–XVe siècle)* (Paris-Rome 1987); Peter G. Bietenholz 'Erasmus von Rotterdam und der Kult des Heiligen Hieronymus' in *Poesis et Pictura: Festschrift für Dieter Wuttke* ed Stephan Füssel and Joachim Knape (Baden-Baden 1989) 191–221.
3 Allen Ep 396 introduction
4 HO II preface to part 1. See 80 below.
5 Ep 22. Erasmus' correspondence with Cornelis Gerard in 1489–90, eighteen letters in all, is remarkable, and it gives a superb picture of his humanist beginnings. On Gerard see Karen Tilmans 'Cornelius Aurelius, Praeceptor Erasmi?' in *Rodolphus Agricola Phrisius 1444–1485* ed F. Akkerman and A.J. Vanderjagt (Leiden 1988) 200–10.
6 The finished work, first published in 1520, is in CWE 23.
7 C. Reedijk ed *The Poems of Desiderius Erasmus* (Leiden 1956) 169–70

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8 Ep 23
9 *'Mystère' et 'Philosophie du Christ' selon Erasme* (Namur-Gembloux 1971) 57–8
10 Ep 108
11 Epp 138, 139, 141, and 149
12 Ep 139:166–72
13 Ep 141:21–9

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14 Ep 141:41–55. In the latter comment Erasmus obviously envisaged the rhetorical commentary he appended to the first letter (see Letter 1 below), as well as other stylistic annotations throughout the edition.

15 See Epp 373 and 384 introductions; Jerry Bentley *Humanists and Holy Writ* (Princeton 1983) chapter 4; Erika Rummel *Erasmus' 'Annotations' on the New Testament* (Toronto 1986).
16 Ep 181:29–36
17 See Epp 182 and 183.
18 Rummel *Erasmus' 'Annotations'* (n15 above) x–xi, 15–17
19 Epp 245, 248, 264, 270, 273, 281, and 296; *Erasmus and Cambridge: The Cambridge Letters of Erasmus* trans D.F.S. Thomson intro H.C. Porter (Toronto 1963) 39–43
20 Ep 296:161–4

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21 Ep 263:31–46; on the fifteen florins, 42n
22 See Ep 283:181–96.
23 *Erasmus: Lectures and Wayfaring Sketches* (Oxford 1934) 124. See also Ep 305.
24 HO v title verso. See 234 below.
25 HO v title verso. See 233 below and also CHR[3] 55–6; AK Epp 335, 391, 420, 429, 451, 469, 498; H.D. Saffrey 'Un humaniste dominicain, Jean Cuno de Nuremberg, précurseur d'Erasme à Bâle' *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 33 (1971) 19–62.
26 See 11 below.

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27 HO v title verso. See 233 below.
28 HO v title. See 231 below.
29 See 10–11 below. Erasmus also gives an account of these Herculean labours in *Adagia* III i 1 and in Epp 333:67–105, 334:104–70, and 335:229–362. These three letters, addressed respectively to Cardinal Raffaele Riario, Cardinal Domenico Grimani, and Pope Leo X, together with Ep 337, Erasmus' letter to Maarten van Dorp, which also discussed the forthcoming edition of Jerome, were published by Froben in August 1515, the first of Erasmus' letters to appear in print. The edition of Jerome thus was well announced.
30 Ep 335

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31 Ep 335:232–47
32 On Erasmus' work as editor and textual critic see Chomarat 480–507; John F. D Amico *Theory and Practice in Renaissance Textual Criticism* (Berkeley 1988) 30–8 *et passim*; Pierre Petitmengin 'Comment étudier l'activité d'Erasme, éditeur de textes antiques?' *Colloquia Erasmiana Turonensia* I 217–22; D.F.S. Thomson 'Erasmus and Textual Scholarship in the Light of Sixteenth-Century Practice' in *Erasmus of Rotterdam: The Man and the Scholar* ed J. Sperna Weiland and W.T.M. Frijhoff (Leiden 1988) 158–71.
33 Ep 273:15–19 and HO v title verso (see 233–4 below). On identifying Erasmus' manuscript sources see the introductions to Ep 396 in Allen and CWE.
34 On early printed editions of Jerome's letters see PL 22 xi–xiv and Rice 122–4. The *editio princeps* is the Roman edition of 1468 printed by Conrad Sweynheym and Arnold Pannartz. At least twenty more followed prior to Erasmus' edition in 1516.

35 Husner 143–4 and Rice 124. Cf ASD IX-2 222:938n, which argues that it is impossible to determine which editions Erasmus used.
36 Ep 308
37 Ep 309

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38 Ep 332:8–10
39 Ep 413:36–9. He had debated whether to dedicate the edition to Warham or the pope (Ep 333:96–105).
40 Epp 439:5–10 and 464:18–20
41 Epp 475:35 and 483:31
42 Cf Ep 486:3. Maarten van Dorp paid fifteen and a half Rhenish florins for his copy unbound (Ep 509:10–12 and n). Ambrose Blaurer notes on the inside cover of volumes I–II of his copy of the edition that it had been purchased for 'ten gold coins (*aurei nummi decem*).'
43 As we indicated in the preface, we have used primarily the copy of this 1516 edition in the library at St Joseph's Seminary in Yonkers, NY. Other copies are in the Beinecke Library at Yale, the Folger Shakespeare Library, the Newberry Library in Chicago, the Bodleian, and the British Library. The nine volumes of this edition are uniformly bound in five. The Folger copy originally belonged to the Benedictine scholar and later reformer at Constance Ambrose Blaurer (1492–1564), who had purchased it in 1517. The copy of the edition at St Joseph's Seminary contains extensive marginalia throughout the nine volumes in what appear to be three, possibly four, different hands. The most prominent hand has written on the title-page of volume I: 'Purchased Monday before the feast of Saint George [April 23] 1518 I began reading on Wednesday after the feast of Saint George and finished reading on the vigil of Saint Michael [September 28] 1521.' For a brief survey of Erasmus' patristic editions see 'Erasmus and the Church Fathers' in John C. Olin *Six Essays on Erasmus* (New York 1979) 33–47.
44 For evaluations in the broader context see Gorce and Rice chapter 5.
45 These prefaces addressed to the reader are in the name of Bruno Amerbach, the eldest, the name of Basilius being added only in volume V. Allen Ep 396 introduction questions their ascription to the Amerbachs, although the personal references in volume V title verso (see 233–6 below) would seem to warrant the attribution in that instance.
46 Ep 335:327–38

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47 Ep 492:105–10. 'The accolades of his friends were not unjustified,' says Rice 124. Also see Gorce 271–4.
48 A sentence Ambrose Blaurer copied on the flyleaf of volumes I–II of his edition
49 *Opuscula* 129. Ferguson edited in *Opuscula* 134–90 a composite text of the *Vita* that was published in the early Erasmus editions of Jerome and separately by Eucherius Hirtzhorn in Cologne in 1517 and by Froben in 1519. The original autograph is in the University Library in Basel (MS A.IX.56 87ff). It was not included in either the Basel *Opera omnia* of 1538–40 or the Leiden *Opera omnia* of 1703–6. Our translation here is from the *Opuscula*.

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50 Rice 132
51 Joseph Coppens 'Le portrait de Saint Jérôme d'après Erasme' in *Colloquia Erasmiana Turonensis* II 822
52 Epp 614:21–30 and 661:36–8
53 See Myron P. Gilmore *Humanists and Jurists* (Cambridge, Mass 1963) chapter 4: '*Fides et Eruditio*: Erasmus and the Study of History'; J. IJsewijn and C. Matheeussen 'Erasme et l'historiographie' in *The Late Middle Ages and the Dawn of Humanism outside Italy* (Louvain 1972) 31–43.
54 On this theme see Georges Chantraine 'Quelle intelligence de son temps Erasme nous donne-t-il?' in *Erasmus of Rotterdam: The Man and the Scholar* ed J. Sperna Weiland and W.T.M. Frijhoff (Leiden 1988) 109–16.
55 These indexes, with their *censurae*, were compiled by Erasmus. An extensive topical index for the entire edition was later compiled by Johannes Oecolampadius and published in a large folio volume by Froben in 1520.
56 See 11–12 below.

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57 The letters are 1, 2, and 3 in this volume.
58 Part 1: ff 2–100v; part 2: ff 101–88; part 3: ff 189–238
59 On the Vergerio sermon see the McManamon reference in n2 above.
60 See 23–4 below.
61 HO II 4 verso. Jerome's letter to Demetriades is Ep 130 and is in HO I 29ff.

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62 HO II 197 verso. See also Rice 128–9, where the vision of the pseudo-Jerome is discussed.
63 See 87–91 below.
64 HO I sig gamma 5. The reference is to St Prosper of Aquitaine (c 390–c 463).
65 Rice 125–9; Petitmengin 'Comment étudier l'activité d'Erasme, éditeur de textes antiques?' (n32 above) 220; Chomarat 504–6, Gorce 271–3; and E.J. Kenney *The Classical Text* (Berkeley 1974) 50–1. Rice particularly stresses this aspect of Erasmus' edition and quotes extensively from the *censurae*.
66 Rice 125–6

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67 See 76 below. John Henry Newman's discussion of style in his 'Lecture on Literature' in the second part of *The Idea of a University* is strikingly similar to Erasmus' discourse. See John Henry Newman *Selected Discourses from The Idea of a University* ed May Yardley (Cambridge 1955) 132–56.
68 The same accusation as well as the same metaphor is found in Erasmus' *Life of Jerome*, where he states his belief that the same individual wrote several ridiculous pseudonymous lives of Jerome. See 23 below.
69 Letters 4 and 5 in this volume
70 See 201 below.
71 Letter 6 in this volume
72 See 218–19 below.

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73 Ep 481:44ff
74 CHR[3] 56
75 HO I sig gamma 4. This index lists those works which are learned but are wrongly attributed to Jerome.
76 HO I sig gamma 4 and gamma 5
77 See ASD IX-2 201:620–2n. Pelagius' commentary is the *editio princeps* and is based on a transcript Gregor Reisch had made from an eleventh-century manuscript borrowed from the monastery of Echternach.
78 See Allen Ep 1465 introduction. This letter is the preface to the revised edition. The Bodleian copy of this edition once belonged to Henry VIII.

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79 Allen Ep 1451
80 See Allen Ep 1465 introduction. For Erasmus' relations with Chevallon see Allen *Erasmus: Lectures and Wayfaring Sketches* (Oxford 1934) 130–2.
81 Allen Epp 1309 introduction and 2157 introduction
82 See 107–8 below for two changes that were made in the Chevallon edition.
83 Allen Ep 2758
84 See Allen Ep 2095.
85 Ep 802. The *privilegia*, an early form of copyright, which was announced on the title-page verso of HO I, forbade anyone to reprint the volumes within the next five years. Froben did publish the *Life of Jerome* in a separate edition in May 1519.
86 See also Ep 815.

xxxi

87 The next major edition of St Jerome is that of Marianus Victorius (or Mariano Vittori), the first three volumes of which were published in Rome in 1565. The printer was Paulo Manuzio, the son of the famous Venetian printer Aldo Manuzio, who completed the edition of nine folio volumes in 1572. It was reprinted in Antwerp by Christophe Plantin in 1578–9. It is a first-class, scholarly work, though fiercely anti-Erasmus, reflecting in that regard the then prevailing view of the Counter-Reformation. On this edition see Rice 154–6. The first Jesuit author, Peter Canisius, also edited and published a single volume of selected letters of Jerome with a preface dated 1565. It saw many editions in the later sixteenth century. Canisius wished that Erasmus had confined himself to editing the letters without injecting his 'poisonous' remarks in the annotations. On Canisius and Erasmus see Bruce Mansfield *Phoenix of His Age* (Toronto 1979) 48–51.
88 Gorce 273
89 Chomarat 536–40
90 See n87 above.
91 See 148 below.
92 See 151–3 below. See also the *antidotus* appended to the preceding letter both in Erasmus' edition and in this volume, where the same view is expressed.

xxxii

93 HO I 20

94 See the Letter to Paul Volz, Erasmus' preface to the 1518 edition of his *Enchiridion militis christiani,* for a fuller statement of his view in this *antidotus* (CHR[3] 120–8 / CWE 66 16–23).

95 HO I 139 verso. The reference to Christ is in Matt 12:20, quoting Isa 42:3. Erasmus frequently uses this example in discussing the approach one should take towards religious dissent, notably in the case of Luther. The reference to Paul would appear to be in Rom 14:1ff. The passage is underlined in the volume at St Joseph's Seminary and has a marginal notation that applies the lesson to the Hussites.

96 HO I 140. Parts of the annotation were inked out in the volume in the Beinecke Library at Yale, the only defacing that occurs in the volume.

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97 HO I sig gamma 6. See also Craig R. Thompson 'Jerome and the Testimony of Erasmus in Disputes over the Vernacular Bible' in *Proceedings of the Patristic, Medieval, and Renaissance Conference* (Villanova University) 6 (1981) 1–36.

98 Erasmus' *Ratio verae theologiae* LB V 82. See also J. Den Boeft '"Illic Aureum Quoddam Ire Flumen": Erasmus' Enthusiasm for the Patres' in *Erasmus of Rotterdam: The Man and the Scholar* ed J. Sperna Weiland and W.T.M. Frijhoff (Leiden 1988) 172–81.

99 For a classic statement of Erasmus' theological perspective see his *Paraclesis,* the introduction to his New Testament of 1516 CHR[3] 97–108. For context and analysis see Hans Urs von Balthasar 'The Unity of Theology and Spirituality' in *Convergences* trans E.A. Nelson (San Francisco 1983) 17–45 and Jean-Pierre Massaut 'Humanisme et spiritualité chez Erasme' *Dictionnaire de spiritualité* VII-1 (1969) 1006–28.

100 T.S. Eliot 'The Idea of a Christian Society' in *Christianity and Culture* (New York n d) 49

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101 Ep 108:22–7

102 See 53 below. The characteristic Erasmian term 'philosophy of Christ' first appeared in the *Paraclesis* several months before. Its use here links the two editions. On the term see CHR[3] 18–19.

103 See 27 below. These remarks are borne out by the account Erasmus gives in his *Life of Jerome.*

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104 Ep 335:239–40

105 On this subject see Werner Schwarz *Principles and Problems of Biblical Translation* (Cambridge 1955).

106 August Humbert *Les origines de la théologie moderne* I: *La Renaissance de l'antiquité chrétienne (1450–1521)* (Paris 1911) 228–38. Humbert emphasizes their kinship on this score. Only one volume of this excellent work appeared. The abbé Humbert fell a victim of the Modernist controversy.

107 Both Chomarat and André Godin *Erasme, lecteur d'Origène* (Geneva 1982) stress this double aim.

108 See 45 below.
109 See 54 below. Revisions of this passage in the *Life of Jerome* in the 1524 edition considerably alter Erasmus' earlier critique.
110 Ep 769:97–114. Surprisingly Eck does not refer to the passage about Filelfo's view in the *Life of Jerome*.
111 Ep 844:132–288

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112 *Luther's Works* 48: *Letters* I ed Gottfried G. Krodel (Philadelphia 1963) Ep 13. See also Rice 138–40.
113 On the deeper dispute between Luther and Erasmus see John W. O'Malley 'Erasmus and Luther, Continuity and Discontinuity' *Sixteenth Century Journal* v/2 (October 1974) 47–65 and Marjorie O'Rourke Boyle *Rhetoric and Reform: Erasmus' Civil Dispute with Luther* (Cambridge, Mass 1983).
114 Ep 501. Spalatinus' letter was occasioned by a letter from Luther to him of 19 October 1516, and it incorporates much of Luther's letter (*Luther's Works* 48 Ep 9). It was Erasmus' early introduction to the Wittenberg theologian.
115 Ep 501:55–62. See also *Luther's Works* 34: *Career of the Reformer* IV ed Lewis W. Spitz (Philadelphia 1960) 337.

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116 Ep 501:41–8

DEDICATORY LETTER (1516)

5

1 Numa was the legendary second king of Rome. The Sibyl is the generic term for several ancient prophetic oracles, notably the Cumaean Sibyl.

6

2 The names in this second list are those of medieval theologians and exegetes: William of Occam (d 1349); either Durandus of Saint-Pourçain (d 1334), an early exponent of nominalism, or William Durandus (d 1296), one of the principal medieval canonists; Johannes Capreolus (d 1444), an important exponent and defender of Thomism; Nicholas of Lyra (d 1340), the most notable medieval biblical scholar and commentator; and Paul of Burgos (d 1435), a scriptural scholar as well as bishop of Burgos and chancellor of Castile.

8

3 Erasmus is referring to the preliminary indexes in the edition and their *censurae* and to the prefaces and the *censurae* in the first and third parts of HO II. Translations of the two prefaces are found on pages 67–82 and 83–97 of this volume.
4 The reference is to a wild boar sent in anger by Diana to ravage the Calydonian countryside and slain after a fierce battle by Meleager. The story is told in Ovid *Metamorphoses* 8.270–424, as well as in the *Iliad* 9.533ff.

9

5 The bee simile recalls St Basil's famous discourse *Ad adolescentes*, where he used this analogy in urging Christian youth to study pagan literature. It was a standard humanist topos.

11

6 On this proverb and its rendering here see *Adagia* I x 71 and Jerome Ep 7.5.

13

7 Jerome's words in this important preface are: 'First read, then, my Samuel and Kings; mine, I say, mine. For whatever by diligent translation and by anxious emendation we have learned and made our own is ours' (Fremantle 490). Erasmus did list the letters of Jerome in the Botzheim catalogue of his own works. See CWE 24 697.

LIFE OF JEROME / *HIERONYMI STRIDONENSIS VITA*

Introductory note

16

1 Peter G. Bietenholz *History and Biography in the Work of Erasmus of Rotterdam* (Geneva 1966) 90–2. On the *Life* see Joseph Coppens 'Le portrait de Saint Jérome d'après Erasme' in *Colloquia Erasmiana Turonensia* II 821–8; J.B. Maguire 'Erasmus' Biographical Masterpiece: *Hieronymi Stridonensis Vita*' *Renaissance Quarterly* 26 (1973) 265–73; John C. Olin '*Eloquentia, Eruditio, Fides*: Erasmus' *Life of Jerome*' in *Acta conventus neo-latini Sanctandreani* ed I.D. McFarlane (Binghamton 1986) 269–74; and Rice 129–35.

2 Cf Quintilian 3.9 and Erasmus *De copia* CWE 24 648.

3 Cf Quintilian 3.7.10–18; Margaret Mann Phillips 'Erasmus and Biography' *University of Toronto Quarterly* 42 (1973) 190–1.

4 Coppens (n1 above) 822

17

5 *De ratione studii* CWE 24 686. See also Jacques Chomarat 'Grammar and Rhetoric in the Paraphrases of the Gospels by Erasmus' *Erasmus of Rotterdam Yearbook 1 (1981)* 65–6.

6 Cf Diana Webb 'Eloquence and Education: A Humanist Approach to Hagiography' *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 31 (1980) 19–39.

7 CWE 28 323–448

8 Cf J.-C. Margolin 'Erasme et la vérité' in *Recherches érasmiennes* (Geneva 1969) 62–5.

18

9 There is a list of the various editions of the *Vita* in *Opuscula* 131–2.

Life of Jerome

19

1 An autograph of the *Vita* in the University Library in Basel (MS A.IX.57), which

appears to be a printer's copy, begins with the words *Quamquam non sum nescius* 'Although I am not unaware.' Husner (135) speculates that Erasmus may have made the change to *Equidem haud sum nescius* 'I am indeed not unaware' as the printer was composing it. See 20–1 illustrations.

2 *Republic* 389B and 414B–415D. See also Sissela Bok *Lying* (New York 1978) chapter 12.

3 Jerome *Apologia contra Rufinum* 1.18 PL 23 412–13 / Jerome *Dogmatic* 82–4. Rufinus of Aquileia (ca 345–410) had been a close friend of Jerome since their school days in Rome. Like Jerome he later travelled to the East and became a monk and a scholar. He translated several important Greek patristic works into Latin including Origen's *Peri archon*. The appearance of the latter in Rome in 398 involved him in a bitter quarrel with Jerome, and both men wrote extensive *apologiae* against the accusations of the other. Erasmus will discuss this controversy at some length and frequently refer to the antagonism between Jerome and Rufinus. He will invariably (and unfairly) view Rufinus as a calumniator and schemer causing much trouble for Jerome.

4 See St Augustine's letters 28 and 40 (addressed to Jerome) = Hilberg Epp 56 and 67 / *Saint Augustine Letters* I trans Sister Wilfred Parsons (New York 1951) 93ff and 172ff; *De mendacio* 17 PL 40 500 / *Saint Augustine Treatises on Various Subjects* ed Roy J. Deferrari trans Sister Mary Sarah Muldowney et al (New York 1952) 77–8. Thomas More refers to Augustine in the same context that Erasmus does here in the dedication to his translations from Lucian. Lucian's dialogue *Philopseudes* inspired his comment. See *The Complete Works of St Thomas More* 3 part 1 ed Craig R. Thompson (New Haven 1974). 7. On this question see also Sissela Bok *Lying* (n1 above), wherein Augustine is extensively quoted.

5 *Adagia* III vi 91; Horace *Epistles* 1.3.19

22

6 Plato *Hippias minor* 367–8

7 *Cyropaedia*

8 *Republic* 2 and 3

9 See Cicero *Pro Archia* 24.

23

10 The word for power in the printed text in *Opuscula* is the Greek *ἐνέργεια*. It is possible that this is an error for the rhetorical term *ἐνάργεια*, which means vividness or brilliance, and the latter seems to be the word written in the autograph of HV. See Erasmus' explanation of *ἐνάργεια* in *De copia* CWE 24 577:8–20 and also Terence Cave '"Enargeia": Erasmus and the Rhetoric of Presence' *L'Esprit Créateur* 16 (1976) 5–19. We thank Craig R. Thompson for calling this possibility to our attention.

11 *Adagia* IV viii 15

12 See preface to HO II part 3, 89 n17 below.

13 Erasmus apparently considers various medieval accounts of Jerome the work of one man, an ignorant and shameless 'ranter,' although they are ascribed to numerous individuals. Eusebius of Cremona was a contemporary and dis-

ciple of Jerome. Damasus is Pope Damasus (366–84), whom Jerome served as secretary from 382 to 384. Erasmus' attribution of these spurious works to one man is puzzling, nor is the identity of the actual author clarified beyond the attack made here. It is also strange that Erasmus makes no reference to an extensive work on the life and miracles of Jerome, the *Hieronymianus*, attributed to the fourteenth-century canonist Johannes Andreae, which had been published as recently as 1514 in Basel. See Rice 64–8, 224–5. Four of the pseudonymous writings are included in part 3 of HO II (209–38), where Erasmus relegated pertinent but worthless *spuria*: Eusebius' *De morte Hieronymi*, Cyril's *De miraculis Hieronymi*, Augustine's *De magnificentiis beati Hieronymi*, and a *Vita divi Hieronymi incerto auctore*. These and several other accounts of a similar type are in PL 22 175–325.

Mention might also be made in this general context of a sermon in praise of Jerome by the elder Pier Paolo Vergerio (c 1370–1444), which was printed in early editions of Jerome's letters and which Erasmus included in HO II 187–8. Vergerio's view of the saint is very similar to Erasmus', and his presentation does not fall under the strictures that Erasmus voices here. On this see John M. McManamon 'Pier Paolo Vergerio (the Elder) and the Beginnings of the Humanist Cult of Jerome' *The Catholic Historical Review* 71 (1985) 353–71.

14 Ie in the first and third prefaces in HO II. See 67–82 and 83–97 below.

15 *Adagia* I x 72, a favourite proverb of Jerome. See Jerome Epp 7.5 and 127.9.

16 Italian humanists. Bartolomeo Platina (1421–81) refers to Jerome in the life of Pope Damasus in his *Vitae pontificum*, which he wrote while Vatican librarian under Sixtus IV. Raffaele Maffei of Volterra (1451–1522) mentions Jerome in his *Commentarii rerum urbanarum* 16.

24

17 The Latin word is *fides*, and it is a key term in Erasmus' attitude towards history. See Allen Epp 45:52 and 586:51 for comparable uses of the word. It carries the notion of honesty and truthfulness on the part of the historian, the warrant for one's faith in him.

18 The authors are St Prosper of Aquitaine (c 390–c 463), Sulpicius Severus (c 360–c 420), and Paulus Orosius, a disciple of Augustine (early fifth century), all of whom left historical and theological works. The latter two visited Jerome at Bethlehem, as Erasmus will later relate.

19 There is disagreement over the date of Jerome's birth. Erasmus has taken the year recorded by Prosper of Aquitaine. It is defended in Kelly 1 and Appendix. Other biographers postulate a much later date, c 345. The town of Stridon has disappeared without a trace. The only record of it is in the autobiographical note that concludes Jerome's *Catalogue of Illustrious Writers* and that Erasmus will quote in the next sentence. The *Catalogue* (also known as *De viris illustribus*) is in HO I 119ff and PL 23 601ff.

20 Erasmus is referring to the Italian historian Flavio Biondo (1388–1463) and to the claim he makes in his *Italia illustrata* 11. See Biondo *Opera* (Basel 1531) 387.

25

21 Ep 13

22 Ep 82.2; preface to Job PL 28 1082B
23 A childhood friend of Jerome who later became a hermit on a deserted isle. Erasmus will discuss him further. See Jerome Ep 3.4, 5.
24 PL 25 375A (The reference is to chapter 12.40.5, not to chapter 11.)
25 Ep 125.6

26

26 Donatus' Latin grammar was widely used during the Middle Ages. Marius Victorinus conducted a famous school in Rome in the mid-fourth century. He later became a Christian, gave up the teaching of rhetoric, and devoted himself to theology. He probably did not teach Jerome, as Erasmus will subsequently explain.
27 PL 27 687–8
28 Ep 58.10
29 PL 23 701. Arius was a heretic whose teachings were condemned at the Council of Nicaea in 325. See ODCC svv 'Arius' and 'Arianism.'

27

30 PL 23 410A / Jerome *Dogmatic* 80
31 PL 23 1019A
32 A work on logic dating from the third century AD
33 The union of theology with eloquence and style is at the heart of Erasmus' humanism.
34 St Pammachius (c 340–410) was a Roman noble and a son-in-law of St Paula (347–404), a Roman matron who was one of Jerome's most devoted disciples. Jerome dedicated several works to Pammachius and eulogizes him in Ep 66.
35 A boyhood and lifelong friend of Jerome, he became the bishop of Altinum (near Aquileia) c 400. Jerome mentions him frequently in his letters and addressed two important ones to him: Ep 14 (the first letter in HO I; see Letter 1 below) urging Heliodorus to join him in the hermit life and Ep 60 (the third letter in HO I) consoling Heliodorus on the death of his nephew Nepotian.
36 Ep 15.1 (Letter 4 below)

28

37 Ep 5.2. The name is Florentinus, not Florentius. He was a monk in Jerusalem with whom Jerome corresponded.
38 Ep 3.5
39 A thought Erasmus frequently expresses. For his personal experience in this regard see his *Compendium vitae* CHR[3] 42 / CWE 4 406–7.
40 Ep 45.6
41 Ep 7.5

29

42 Erasmus' stress on freedom (*libertas*) in the monastic life was a characteristic theme and certainly ran counter to prevailing practice. It foretokens Rabelais' utopian Abbey of Thélème.

43 St Hilarion (c 291–371) was a Palestinian hermit, a life of whom Jerome wrote. Erasmus included it in HO I 111ff.
44 Ep 125
45 Ep 58.5ff. St Paulinus of Nola (c 355–431) came from a wealthy Bordeaux family. He became a monk in mid-life and later bishop of Nola in southern Italy. A cultivated and polished writer, he corresponded with many famous Christians of his day including Jerome. Jerome wrote him two notable letters: Ep 53 on the study of Holy Scripture (Letter 6 below) and Ep 58 in response to Paulinus' request for advice on the ascetic life.
46 Ep 22.34ff (Letter 3 below)
47 Several new religious orders had been founded in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries that claimed to follow a rule instituted by Jerome.

30

48 Ep 3. The letter is addressed to Rufinus. The part quoted is from Ep 3.4. Onesimus was a slave of Philemon on whose behalf St Paul wrote his Epistle to Philemon. The reference here is to a servant of Bonosus.
49 Ep 3.5. The lines quoted are an apostrophe to the Lord Jesus. Erasmus' text differs slightly from the text in Hilberg.
50 The sentence recalls themes in the *Enchiridion militis christiani*: the Fourth Rule (CWE 66 61–5) and the famous 'Monachatus non est pietas' (CWE 66 127).
51 Ep 14 (Letter 1 below)

31

52 Ep 6. Julian, a deacon of Aquileia, was a spiritual guide to Jerome's sister, as Erasmus will presently explain.
53 Jerome had previously met Evagrius in Italy and later stayed with him for a year or so in his native Antioch, where he was a priest and later bishop. See Ep 3.3, and also Ep 1.15.
54 Ep 3.6
55 Epp 6.2 and 7.4. The time was 374–5.
56 Ep 7.4. The incipit in Hilberg reads 'Non debet charta dividere.'

32

57 Ep 14 (Letter 1 below)
58 Bishop John and Jerome became involved c 394 in a quarrel that was a prelude to Jerome's controversy with Rufinus a few years later. Jerome had translated into Latin a letter of Epiphanius of Salamis to John of Jerusalem accusing the latter of holding heretical Origenist views (Jerome Ep 51). John in turn accused Jerome of falsely interpreting the letter and defended himself against the charge of Origenism. The fact that Paulinianus as a young man was ordained by Epiphanius injected that issue into the quarrel. Regarding Origenism as well as Jerome's quarrel with Bishop John, see ODCC sv 'Origenism' and Wright appendix II.
59 In Ep 57 and his *Contra Johannem Hierosolymitanum* PL 23 355–96
60 Ep 66.14
61 Ep 81.2
62 Ep 82

63 See Letter 4 below (Jerome Ep 15) including Erasmus' annotations.
64 PL 25 1098B
65 The Greek term *hypostasis* was used in the East at this time in Christological discussion to signify a 'person.' This caused some confusion among westerners like Jerome who understood the term as a synonym for *ousia*, that is, 'being' or 'substance.'
66 Epp 15 (Letter 4 below) and 16

33
67 Adagia I iv 16
68 Romans 12.1
69 The theme of 'the spoiling of the Egyptians' is taken from Augustine's *De doctrina christiana* 2.40.60, where the event described in Exodus 3.22 is used to justify the study and use of pagan literature by Christians. See also Erasmus *Antibarbari* CWE 23 97–8.

34
70 Ep 14 (Letter 1 below)
71 PL 25 1097. The first commentary on Obadiah has been lost. Jerome refers to it in the preface of a second commentary he wrote many years later.
72 Ep 84.3
73 Preface to Daniel PL 28 1291–2

35
74 Ep 22.30. Therein is related the famous story of the dream. Erasmus will discuss it more fully later on. See Letter 3 below.
75 Ep 22.7
76 Ep 127.7. Jerome returned to Rome in the summer of 382 in the company of these two eastern bishops, whom the western emperor Gratian had summoned. See Kelly 80–1.
77 It appears that Jerome had been ordained a priest several years earlier by Paulinus in Antioch. See Kelly 58. The sentence was omitted in the 1533 edition.

36
78 Erasmus is rejecting the accepted view in legend and art of Jerome as a cardinal.
79 Ep 123.10. The incipit in Hilberg reads 'In veteri via.' St Damasus, pope from 366 to 384, was an outstanding early bishop of Rome. Impressed by Jerome's learning and devotion he became his friend and patron, employed him as his secretary, and commissioned him to revise the Latin Bible.
80 See Ep 127, which is a biographical memoir written on the occasion of Marcella's death in 410. She was a noble Roman widow whose house on the Aventine had become a centre for a group of women wishing to lead a religious life. Jerome addressed many letters to her. See Wright appendix I.
81 St Athanasius (c 296–373) was the bishop of Alexandria and a staunch opponent of Arianism. His life of St Anthony of Egypt introduced monasticism to the West.

82 Erasmus follows the account in Ep 127.5. The women mentioned became ardent disciples of Jerome, especially Paula and her daughter Eustochium.
83 Ep 127.7

37

84 Horace *Epistles* 2.1.13–14
85 Another noble Roman widow attracted to the ascetic life. She had actually gone to the East, where she met Rufinus, c 372, and she later established a convent for women on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem.
86 See Horace *Epistles* 2.1.12.
87 Erasmus anticipates the controversy over Origen and Jerome's involvement in it by a decade or more. On this subject see Wright appendix II and Kelly 195ff. Also see n113 below.
88 This story made its appearance in the thirteenth-century *Legenda aurea* of Jacobus de Voragine; see *The Golden Legend of Jacobus de Voragine* trans Granger Ryan and Helmut Ripperger (London and New York 1941) 588.
89 Ep 45

38

90 See n87 above. The attack on Rufinus that follows is unjust. He was not in Rome at that time (382–5), nor had his friendship with Jerome yet been interrupted by the Origenist controversy.
91 Ep 22 (Letter 3 below)
92 Ep 45.2
93 The sentence in Hilberg does not have 'and Melania.' Actually Melania had departed for the East many years before (see n85 above). Paula and Eustochium set out for the Holy Land in 385, a few months after Jerome's departure.

39

94 This sentence in Ep 45.3 in Hilberg reads (in translation): 'My words were on the lips of Damasus of blessed memory.'
95 See n93 above.

41

96 *Apologia contra Rufinum* 3.22 PL 23 473 / Jerome *Dogmatic* 190–1
97 Ep 108.7ff
98 Preface to Chronicles (LXX) PL 29 401
99 Jerome evidently knew and studied with this famous preacher and theologian when the latter was in Constantinople from 379 to 381, and he frequently refers to him as his teacher. See Epp 50.4 and 52.8; *Catalogue of Illustrious Writers* 117 PL 23 707; *Commentary on Isaiah* 6.1 CCL 73 89.
100 PL 23 709
101 Ep 84.3. Apollinarius was bishop of nearby Laodicea and a notable scholar and exegete.
102 Jerome visited Alexandria to study with Didymus the Blind in 386. See Ep 84.3; *Commentary on Ephesians* prologue PL 26 440B; *Commentary on Hosea* prologue CCL 76 xxii. Jerome calls him 'the Sighted One' in *Commentary on Galatians* prologue PL 26 309A.

42

103 In his *Apologia* 2.12 PL 21 584C

104 *Adagia* I ix 54 and 55. In the *Adagia* Erasmus applies the proverbial expression to theologians who lack the three learned languages, and he praises Jerome for having mastered them.

105 Ep 108.19–20. Paula died at Bethlehem in 404.

106 She returned to Rome from the East in 397 and took Rufinus' side in the controversy with Jerome that soon developed.

107 Ep 132.3. Melania in Greek may mean blackness.

108 Erasmus is in error here. Marcella had never left Rome. He has confused her with another Roman matron, Fabiola, who came east and then returned to Rome for the reason given (Ep 77.7–8).

109 Ep 127.10

110 On Jerome's role in translating Holy Scripture see 'Vulgate' in ODCC and Erasmus' comments in the dedicatory preface to his edition of Lorenzo Valla's *Adnotationes* on the New Testament, Ep 182:157–78.

43

111 In his *Apologia* 2.8 PL 21 589–90

112 *Satires* 2.1.23

113 See Kelly 195ff. The Origenist controversy actually began in the East with an attack by Epiphanius on John of Jerusalem (see n58 above). The clash soon involved Jerome on Epiphanius' side and Rufinus on John's. Erasmus will continue to exaggerate Rufinus' culpability and wicked scheming.

114 Ep 5

115 *Politics* 1328a17

44

116 Publilius Syrus *Sententiae* 208

117 Gennadius of Marseilles (late fifth century) compiled a *Catalogus illustrium virorum*, which continued Jerome's. Erasmus included it for its historical value in HO II 156 verso–162 verso (it is also in PL 58 1059–1120). The reference here is to Gennadius' notice on Rufinus.

118 Jerome conducted a vigorous polemic with him and wrote an abusive *Contra Vigilantium* PL 23 339–52. See ODCC SV 'Vigilantius.'

119 Author of *Historia Lausiaca*, a history of early monasticism, in which he criticizes Jerome and praises Rufinus. Jerome called him 'a slave to villany' in his *Dialogus adversus Pelagianos* prologue PL 23 497B / Jerome *Dogmatic* 233.

120 See Ep 70 (Letter 5 below).

121 Close friends of Jerome at Rome, they were shocked by the vehemence and coarseness of Jerome's *Adversus Jovinianum* PL 23 211–338 and sought to take the work out of circulation. This preceded the quarrel with Rufinus, however.

122 Epp 49 and 50

45

123 The relationship between Jerome and Augustine is revealed in a correspondence (nineteen letters are extant) initiated by the bishop of Hippo in 394.

It records a friendship 'always difficult, sometimes stormy.' Erasmus' comments, however, about Augustine's early attitude towards Jerome are unwarranted. On their exchange see Robert J. O'Connell 'When Saintly Fathers Feuded: The Correspondence between Augustine and Jerome' *Thought* 54 (December 1979) 344–64 and Kelly 217–20, 263–72.

124 This sentence was omitted in the 1524 edition.

125 The reference here is to Augustine's Epp 28 and 40 (see n4 above), wherein Augustine criticizes Jerome for interpreting the episode in Galatians 2:11–14 as a deliberate dissimulation. Augustine argued that if one admits that a single passage in the Bible contains a falsehood then its veracity as a whole is called into question. Erasmus agreed with Jerome on this issue. See CWE 42 104 n5 (163).

126 The expression is in Greek. Cf *Adagia* III iii 84.

127 See *Apologia contra Rufinum* 2.24 PL 23 447–8 / Jerome *Dogmatic* 143–5.

128 *Apologia contra Rufinum* 3

129 See nn58 and 113 above.

46

130 Literally 'who threw cold water upon him, as they say.' See *Adagia* I X 51.

131 Virgil *Aeneid* 6.471

132 See nn58 and 113 above.

133 Patriarch of Alexandria 385 to 412, he sought to mediate the quarrel between Jerome and John of Jerusalem. He later became fiercely anti-Origenist.

134 Bishop of Aquileia c 388 to 407 and friend of both Jerome and Rufinus, he sought to restrain and reconcile the two angry disputants.

135 *Commentary on Obadiah* prologue PL 25 1098A

136 Eg Ep 3.1 and 3. This sentence and the next two were added in 1524. Chomarat (182) believes they express Erasmus' sense of affinity with Jerome.

137 Ep 18.16

138 Ep 108.34. This sentence and part of the next one were omitted in 1524.

47

139 The exact year of Jerome's death is uncertain. If he was born in 331 as Erasmus asserts then his ninety-first year would be 421. Modern biographers fix the year of his death as 419 or 420.

140 This is the basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore, which from early times had a chapel containing relics of the manger of Bethlehem.

141 The reference is to the pseudo-Cyril *De miraculis Hieronymi*. See n13 above.

142 It was generally believed that Pope Damasus had asked Jerome to do this. The divine office is the breviary of daily or canonical prayers said by priests and monks.

143 Jerome reports in his *Catalogue of Illustrious Writers* HO I 137 verso / PL 23 715B that his friend Sophronius translated several works of his into Greek: Ep 22, the life of St Hilarion, and his new translations from Hebrew into Latin of the Psalms and the Prophets. Sophronius also translated the *Catalogue* into Greek, a version Erasmus printed alongside Jerome's original Latin in HO.

144 Alypius visited Jerome at Bethlehem in 393 and brought back a glowing description of him to Augustine (Ep 56.1).

145 Orosius visited Jerome in 415 at Augustine's suggestion. See Kelly 317–21.
146 Sulpicius describes his visit to Jerome in his *Dialogi* 1.8–9 PL 20 189–90. Jerome however seems to have suspected him of Pelagianism.
147 Apodemius, a monk who visited Jerome in 406, has sometimes been identified with the first bishop of Angers.

48

148 Ep 48.20; Jerome quotes Virgil *Aeneid* 5.217.
149 Ep 7.4
150 Ep 22.23 (Letter 3 below). The 'not only' (*non tantum*) is not in the Hilberg text. The entire paragraph discussing this passage was added in the 1533 edition. The passage is also discussed in the addendum following the annotations to Letter 3 below.

49

151 *Eclogues* 6.63
152 Ep 53.8 (Letter 6 below)
153 See n150 above.
154 See 22 above.
155 A reference, it would seem, to a Tecla (Thelca) of Iconium, a dubious first-century saint, whose virginity and attendant miracles were legendary.
156 A notable Italian humanist (1398–1481) Filelfo himself had a reputation for virulent attacks on rival humanists. Erasmus will discuss another view of his below.

50

157 *Andria* 310
158 *Adagia* I iv 17. The proverbial expression is actually *velis equisque*, which we have rendered 'with might and main.'
159 PL 23 355–96
160 Ep 117. Jerome actually does not use any names in this letter.
161 Possibly Jerome Ep 1
162 Jerome denounced Rufinus under a variety of names, Grunnius ('the Grunter') and Scorpius ('the Scorpion') being two favourites. The former appears in Ep 125.18, the latter in *Commentary on Ezekiel* 1 prologue PL 25 16A. Calpurnius Lanarius appears in Epp 70.6 and 102.3. Luscius Lavinius (or correctly Luscius Lanuvinus) is the name of a rival and critic of Terence. Erasmus himself used the fictitious name Grunnius as the name of the addressee of an important letter he wrote in 1516 in connection with his appeal for a dispensation from Rome (Ep 447).
163 The reference is to the story of the dream Jerome narrates in Ep 22.30. See Letter 3 below and Erasmus' annotation at section 30.
164 Valla (1406–57) and Poliziano (1454–94) were among the most learned and important Renaissance humanists. Valla discusses Jerome's dream and the issue it raises in his *Elegantiae linguae latinae* 4 preface (*Opera* [Basel 1543] 117–20), a work Erasmus knew since his early days in the monastery at Steyn (see Ep 23:108–11). Poliziano refers to it in his *Miscellanea* 1 (*Opera* [Leiden 1539] 509).

165 See CWE 23 1–122. The *Antibarbari* was first published by Froben in 1520, but Erasmus had begun to write it as a young monk at Steyn c 1487–8. On the question of Jerome and classical literature see Edwin A. Quain 'St Jerome as a Humanist' in *A Monument to St. Jerome* ed F.X. Murphy (New York 1952).

51

166 *Apologia contra Rufinum* 1.30–1 PL 23 421–4 / Jerome *Dogmatic* 99–103
167 See *Adagia* I ix 1.
168 The above two sentences were added in the 1533 edition.
169 Jerome reports that he spoke thus in the story he tells in Ep 22.30.
170 *Rufini apologiae* 2.8 PL 21 589–90
171 Ep 57

52

172 Johannes Capreolus (c 1380–1444), Alexander of Hales (c 1186–1245), Egidio Colonna or Giles of Rome (c 1247–1316), and Duns Scotus (c 1265–1308) were notable scholastic theologians frequently satirized by Erasmus.
173 Aristotle
174 1 Tim 1:3–7. Cf Erasmus' lengthy annotation on 1 Tim 1:6 (*in vaniloquium*) LB VI 926D–928E.
175 'Thomistic or Scotistic or Occamistic' was changed to 'Aristotelian' in the 1524 edition.
176 The title 'Our Master' (*magister noster*) was the usual one for a Paris theologian.

53

177 See 'Exegesis, medieval' in *The New Catholic Encyclopedia* 5 (1967) 707ff.

54

178 See n156. The reference here is to a 1449 letter of Filelfo's published in his *Epistolae*. It is cited in PL 22 225. Johann Eck referred to it in a letter to Erasmus of 2 February 1518, in which he agreed with Filelfo's judgment and criticized Erasmus' disparagement of Augustine in one of his New Testament annotations (Ep 769:97–114). He did not, however, refer to this passage in the HV. Erasmus replied to Eck in a letter of 15 May 1518 (Ep 844) and defended Jerome in much the same vein as here.
179 This sentence was added in the 1524 edition. It would seem to contradict, however, what Erasmus had previously said.
180 This sentence was also added in the 1524 edition. It obviously softens Erasmus' earlier critique.
181 Gaza (ca 1400–75) came to Italy from Constantinople c 1435 and subsequently taught Greek there and translated many of the ancient Greek authors. Erasmus translated sections of his Greek grammar into Latin. The story told here was related by a secondary Florentine humanist, Pietro Crinito (1465–1505), in his *De honesta disciplina* 1.10, as Erasmus will shortly explain. In the 1524 edition this entire story together with Erasmus' critical comments about Crinito (up to the paragraph beginning 'What, I ask, is that Roman

purity?') was abridged to read: 'Moreover it is amazing how wide a currency among certain men too learned in pagan lore was given to Theodorus Gaza's remark that Jerome had been beaten unjustly as a Ciceronian. Nor are critics lacking whose palates long for the purity of Roman speech in the works of that man.'

182 John Bessarion (1403–72), Greek scholar and later cardinal, came to Italy at the time of the Council of Ferrara-Florence in 1438 and remained there.

183 Georgius Gemistos Plethon (c 1355–1450) also came to Italy in the Greek entourage in 1438. He is particularly noted for inspiring a new interest in Plato among the Florentine humanists.

55

184 Erasmus will take Crinito to task for the wrong use of the Latin participle *affectatus*, which means 'studied' or 'affected.' Crinito thought erroneously that since it was derived from the verb *affecto* it meant in this context something eagerly pursued or striven for.

56

185 Erasmus in this passage and in another that shortly follows launches an attack on Renaissance Ciceronianism that foreshadows in its essential arguments his *Ciceronianus* of 1528.

57

186 Julius Pomponius Laetus (1425–98), founder of the Roman Academy, was a distinguished Roman humanist.

187 On Valla and Poliziano see n164 above.

188 Barbaro (1453–93) was an important Venetian humanist and professor of philosophy at Padua.

189 Pico della Mirandola (1463–94) was a brilliant young philosopher famous for the breath of his learning and his syncretic aims in philosophy and religion.

190 Agricola (1444–85) was the pioneer German humanist and the teacher of Erasmus' own teacher Alexander Hegius. Erasmus frequently refers to him with great respect (Epp 23:57–61, 311:27–9).

191 *Ars poetica* 309ff

58

192 Erasmus uses the Greek words ἤθη and πάθη in refering to these dispositions. On these see Quintilian 6.2.8–20.

59

193 *Adagia* I vii 94

194 The reference is to Valla's *Elegantiae linguae latinae* 5.6.

195 Martial *Epigrams* 1.65:3–4. The Latin word *ficus* has a double meaning in Martial's comment. It may mean either 'figs' or, as in the second instance, 'haemorrhoids.'

196 Beroaldo the Elder (1453–1505) was a noted Italian humanist and professor of rhetoric and poetry at Bologna. He edited and wrote commentaries on

many of the Latin classics. Beroaldo's reference is to Jerome's *Apologia contra Rufinum* 3.6, where Jerome views Rufinus' use of the verb *comparo* 'to acquire' in place of *emo* 'to buy' as slovenly speech.

60

197 See n143.

198 The point here is that according to Beroaldo Jerome used the adjective *pexa* 'woolly' in a wrong sense. The expression *pexa tunica* is found in Horace *Epistles* 1.1.95. Jerome used the same term in a passage in his *Adversus Jovinianum* 2.21 PL 23 315C, which Erasmus will quote, but he gave quite a different meaning to it.

61

199 Pio (c 1460–1540) was a pupil of Beroaldo and taught at Bologna and elsewhere. His criticisms pertain to Jerome's translations in Ps 1:4 and Jer 9:17.

200 *Adagia* III ii 65

PREFACES TO VOLUME II OF THE EDITION OF ST JEROME

Preface to Volume II (1516) Part 1

67

1 *Adagia* IV viii 26 and I iii 66 (the latter in CWE 31 290–1). A *censoria virgula*, which we have rendered as 'censor's rod,' may also mean a critical mark or obelisk indicating that a passage is spurious. See Quintilian 1.4.3.

68

2 Horace *Satires* 1.3.40

3 Perhaps Rom 2:14–15

69

4 Socrates frequently criticized the opinions of the multitude, eg *Republic* 6.493.

5 *Epistles* 2.14

71

6 See OCD sv 'Aristarchus (2).'

7 Apocryphal Homeric works. Erasmus ascribes the latter to Homer in his preface to the *Praise of Folly*.

8 Quintilian 5.11.19

9 The two works mentioned are later *spuria* attributed to Aristotle.

10 Phalaris was a sixth-century BC Greek tyrant of legendary cruelty. The letters bearing his name are *spuria* dating from several centuries later.

11 Aulus Gellius 3.3.3. One hundred thirty plays were attributed to Plautus in the first century BC. Varro's list is very selective.

12 The author of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* is unknown. Until the fifteenth century it had been considered a work of Cicero.

72

13 On Beroaldo see *Life of Jerome* n196 above.
14 See OCD sv 'Declamationes Pseudo-Quintilianeae.'
15 Publilius (not Publius) was a famous Roman mime-writer in the first century BC. His work contains Senecan accretions.
16 An apocryphal correspondence of fourteen letters between the Roman moralist Seneca and St Paul that has the commonplace character Erasmus indicates. See Allen Ep 2092.
17 Boethius (c 480–524) is the author of *The Consolation of Philosophy* and of several other works of great importance in medieval education.
18 See Jerome's preface to Daniel PL 28 1291–4.
19 Preface to Ezra PL 28 1403. On 3 and 4 Ezra as apocrypha see *Jerome Biblical Commentary* 68:38–41. Also see Letter 6, 227 below.
20 See Letter 6, 227 and n91 below.
21 On Erasmus' view of the Apocalypse see Bentley *Humanists and Holy Writ* (Princeton 1983) 160.

73

22 See Jerome's *Catalogue of Ecclesiastical Writers* 1 PL 23 607–9 and Ep 120.11.
23 *Catalogue of Ecclesiastical Writers* 9 PL 23 623
24 *Catalogue of Ecclesiastical Writers* 54 PL 23 663–7
25 Aulus Gellius 3.3.10
26 See n23 above and *Jerome Biblical Commentary* 62:2–4.
27 Dionysius the Areopagite was a convert of St Paul mentioned in Acts 17:34, and Erasmus is referring to the controversy over identifying him with St Denys, the martyred bishop of Paris (c 250), and with the author of the later Pseudo-Dionysian writings. Erasmus questioned this identification.
28 Aristophanes the grammarian (c 257–180 BC) was a scholarly editor and author of many works including a critical edition of the comedies of Aristophanes the poet (c 445–c 385 BC). There were many prominent Scipios, all related to the renowned Roman soldier and statesman Scipio Africanus (236–184 BC).

74

29 That is, Isidore of Seville (c 560–636) and Gilbert de la Porrée (c 1080–1154), an important scholastic theologian.
30 On these letters see 71 n10 above.
31 Portius the brigand, that is, *Portius latro* in the Latin text, should read Porcius Latro (d 4 AD), a famous professor of rhetoric at Rome. He is mentioned in Quintilian 9.2.91 and 10.5.18. A printer's error, no doubt.
32 These examples of Christian apocrypha are discussed in *Jerome Biblical Commentary* 68:50–65.

76

33 A touchstone. See *Adagia* I v 87.
34 Aulus Gellius 3.3.1–2
35 *Apologia contra Rufinum* 2.19 PL 23 414 / Jerome *Dogmatic* 138

36 Ep 84.10
37 See introduction xxvii–xxviii above.
38 *Catalogue of Ecclesiastical Writers* 15 PL 23 631–4

77

39 Erasmus is referring to his *Panegyric for Archduke Philip of Austria*, a work he wrote in late 1503. See CWE 27 2–75.

78

40 The name are those of medieval theologians: Petrus Tartaretus, a fifteenth-century Scotist; Thomas Bricot (d 1516), a member of the faculty of theology at Paris; Duns Scotus (d 1308); William of Occam (d 1349); Nicholas of Lyra (d 1340), the most important medieval biblical scholar and commentator; and Hugh of St Cher (d 1264), an earlier biblical commentator whom Erasmus frequently linked with Lyra.
41 Fulvius and Rutuba are gladiators mentioned in Horace's *Satires* 2.7.96. Apelles and Zeuxis are two of the greatest painters of antiquity.
42 See Quintilian 9.4.73. Erasmus refers to a concluding cadence or metre frequently used by Cicero, a trochaic tetrameter – ⏑ ⏑ ⏑ – ⏑.
43 Cf Quintilian 6.2.8.

79

44 Reference not identified

80

45 Erasmus discusses this feature of Jerome's work at some length in the third preface in this section.

81

46 Perhaps *Catalogue of Ecclesiastical Writers* 53 PL 23 661–4
47 Erasmus has more to say about Gratian and his collection of canon law known as the *Decretum* in the next preface, 93ff below.

82

48 Sedulius Scotus was a ninth-century scholar, exegete, and poet. See PL 103 9ff.

Preface to Volume II (1516) Part 3

83

1 *Works and Days* 174ff

84

2 That is, without any selection or discrimination. See *Adagia* I v 88 CWE 31 461.
3 *Iliad* 9.319
4 Plutarch *Alexander* 4.1–2
5 The reference is to Aulus Gellius 19.3 rather than to Seneca.

85

6 See *Adagia* I i 10 CWE 31 59–60. Parmeno was a mimic whose imitation of a pig's squealing sounded more real than an actual pig's.
7 Erasmus served as a secretary to the bishop from 1493 to the summer of 1495. Little else is known about Pietro Santeramo.
8 Fausto Andrelini of Forlì (1462–1518) lectured at the University of Paris from 1489 on. He was well known for his poetry and was made royal poet in 1496. He was one of Erasmus' first friends in Paris.
9 Cop (c 1466–1532), a native of Basel, was court physician to Louis XII and Francis I and had published translations of Hippocrates and Galen. He and Erasmus were old friends.

87

10 That is, in the *Aeneid* 2.57–194. Sinon was a pretended Greek deserter who told the Trojans a false tale about the Trojan horse.

88

11 See 19 above.
12 See ODCC sv 'Augustinian Hermits or Friars.'
13 Augustine was baptized by St Ambrose, bishop of Milan, in 387.

89

14 Simplicianus was a tutor to Ambrose and his successor in 397 as bishop of Milan. He was an important influence on Augustine.
15 Monica was Augustine's mother, Adeodatus was his son, and Alypius was a boyhood and lifelong friend. Both Adeodatus and Alypius were baptized with Augustine.
16 *Declamationes maiores* 1, where a case is argued against a stepmother for the bloody murder of her husband instead of against his son, at whom the evidence at first seemed to point.
17 Vertumnus, Empusa, and Proteus are mythological creatures capable of assuming various shapes.
18 Reference not identified
19 Erasmus refers to the spurious *Regula monacharum* whose author he severely criticizes in *censurae* both in HO II part 3 and in the index. See introduction xxvii above.

90

20 That is, a touchstone. See *Adagia* I v 87.
21 *De doctrina christiana* 2.6

91

22 'The shoe of Thomas' calls to mind Erasmus' famous colloquy *Peregrinatio religionis ergo* 'A Pilgrimage for Religion's Sake,' in which the shoe and similar relics of the saints offered for veneration are ridiculed.

92

23 The above lines echo the concluding lines of the *Paraclesis*, Erasmus' introduc-

tion to his New Testament, where he says the Gospel writings render Christ more fully present than any other image or relic. See CHR[3] 108.

24 *Adagia* I ix 64 and 65

25 Sardanapalus was an effeminate king of Assyria who at last burned himself to death. He is mentioned in Cicero's *Tusculan Disputations* 5.35 among other places.

93

26 Gratian (twelfth century) is the author of the great collection of decretals and other texts known as the *Decretum Gratiani*. It was the basic work in medieval canon law. See ODCC sv 'Gratian.'

27 *Palea* (meaning chaff or straw) refers to certain texts in the *Decretum* identified as such to distinguish them from 'good grain.' The exchange between Diomede and Glaucus is an episode in the *Iliad* 6.234–6 where the two warriors exchanged their armour, Glaucus giving his gold armour in return for Diomede's bronze. It became a proverb signifying an unequal or dissimilar exchange. It is mentioned in the *Pandects*, part of the Justinian Code, where it refers to the change in the laws that Justinian was effecting. Erasmus discusses this proverb as well as the *Pandects* reference in *Adagia* I ii 1 CWE 31 144–6.

28 The reference is to Isidore of Seville (c 560–636) whose works are frequently drawn on and quoted in Gratian's *Decretum*. One, wrongly attributed to him, is an early medieval collection known as the False Decretals. Erasmus refers to it below. Another is his encyclopedic *Etymologiae*. The character of the latter is why Erasmus refers to him as a philologist (that is, *grammaticus*). Erasmus comments on some borrowings from the *Etymologiae* in an annotation to Letter 2 (148 n36 below).

29 That is, the Venerable Bede (c 673–735). His works were drawn on by Gratian for the *Decretum*.

30 On the latter see *Jerome Biblical Commentary* 61:2–3.

94

31 There is a general comment indicating this towards the end of the preceding preface.

95

32 Reference not identified

33 See the preceding preface.

34 The traditional story was that the Greek version of the Old Testament known as the Septuagint was made by seventy-two translators, each working separately in his own cell and producing an identical text. Jerome called the story a lie in his preface to the Pentateuch PL 28 150, which he also quoted in his *Apologia contra Rufinum* 2.25 PL 23 449 / Jerome *Dogmatic* 147–8.

96

35 The reference is to Lorenzo Valla's *Adnotationes* on the New Testament. See Jerry H. Bentley *Humanists and Holy Writ* (Princeton 1983) 49–69.

36 Jacques Lefèvre (1455–1536) was the great French humanist whose life and

work in many ways parallel that of Erasmus. His edition of St Paul's Epistles was published in Paris in 1512. See Eugene F. Rice jr ed *The Prefatory Epistles of Jacques Lefèvre d'Etaples and Related Texts* (New York 1972) Ep 96. See also Erasmus' very similar comments about the scriptural work of Lefèvre as well as of Valla in his letter to Maarten van Dorp of May 1515 (Ep 337:877–94 / CHR[3] 94–5).

37 *Nicomachean Ethics* 1.6.1096

38 Paul of Middelburg (1445–1533) was involved in a controversy with scholars at Louvain on this subject. The work alluded to here was published in 1513.

97

39 Erasmus wrote to Leo X in May 1515 and discussed at some length the forthcoming edition of Jerome (Ep 335). The pope's very favourable response and promise of liberality were expressed in a letter from Leo to Erasmus dated 10 July 1515 (Ep 338). Andrea Ammonio in a letter to Erasmus also reports on the pope's great delight in hearing from Erasmus (Ep 389).

40 The date given in Allen, where this preface has been excerpted as Ep 326, is March 1515. The discrepancy is due to the fact that Erasmus' autograph of the preface has March, whereas a manuscript copy used by the printers in 1516 has August.

Prefatory letter to Volume II (1524)

100

1 Cataphrygians is another name for Montanists; the Borborites, Ophites and Basilidians were Gnostic sects; the Manichaeans were a widespread movement of Persian origin that at one time numbered St Augustine among its adherents. On these early heretical movements see ODCC SVV.

2 On Erasmus' view of the Arians see James D. Tracy 'Erasmus and the Arians: Remarks on the *Consensus Ecclesiae*' *The Catholic Historical Review* 67 (1981) 1–10. On the Arian heresy see ODCC SV 'Arianism.'

3 Erasmus has made this same complaint in his life of Jerome. See 37 and 43–4 above. On 'the school of Origen,' see ODCC SVV 'Origen' and 'Origenism.'

4 This entire sentence beginning 'Nor did any evil' was added in 1524 to the text of the 1516 preface to HO III which is included in this present one. Liberius was pope from 352 to 366. The Arian emperor Constantius forced him to assent to an Arian formulary.

101

5 The names refer to characters in Terence's comedy *Adelphi*.

6 *Odes* 4.4.57–60

102

7 Warham was lord chancellor from 1504 to 1515. He resigned the office in December 1515 and was succeeded by Cardinal Wolsey.

8 So Erasmus also declares in HO II part 1 preface. See 80 above.

SELECTIONS FROM JEROME'S LETTERS WITH ERASMUS' COMMENTARIES

Introductory note

106

1 The letters in Fremantle were translated from the Latin text in Migne's *Patrologia latina* 22. Some minor revision of the translation has been made. In translating scriptural quotations Fremantle followed the Authorized or King James version, and we also have used that version in our translation of Erasmus' notes.

2 On Erasmus' organization in HO I–IV, see introduction xxiv–xxix above. Migne and Fremantle number the letters in Jerome's correspondence chronologically from 1 to 150. Of these 117 are Jerome's own (115 are in Erasmus' edition), 30 are letters of others (13 appear in Erasmus' edition), and 3 are dubious or spurious. Hilberg includes four additional letters of Jerome at the end of the series, and his numbers run from 1 to 154.

3 CWE 25 97. It is the only letter of Jerome that Erasmus has a substantial reference to in *De conscribendis epistolis*.

4 See Rice 126–9 and notes.

5 See introduction xxxi–xxxiii above.

107

6 See 11 above.

7 HO I 76 verso. The passage Erasmus is annotating is in the letter to Eustochium on the death of her mother Paula (Ep 108.6) and is in HO I 81. The letter Erasmus refers to in the last sentence of his annotation is Jerome's letter to Evagrius (Evangelus) on the origin and office of the bishop (Ep 146 HO III 149 verso ff).

8 The same remark, however, was made in an *antidotus* appended to the letter to Evagrius (HO III 150 verso) and was retained in later editions.

9 Ep 15 (Letter 4) below. See 198 for the annotation.

10 Ep 53 (Letter 6) below. See 218–19 for the account that was deleted.

11 The reference to P.G. Wodehouse calls to mind H.W. Garrod's remark in his *Compendium vitae P.S. Allen* that Allen was a devoted reader not only of Erasmus but also of Wodehouse (Allen VIII xiii).

12 Ep 52 (Letter 2) below. See 149–51 and n51.

13 Ep 22 (Letter 3) below. See 185 and n35.

108

14 See introduction xv–xvii above. Erasmus first mentions working on Jerome and preparing a commentary in two letters to Jacob Batt in December 1500 (Epp 138:45, 139:50–2, 166–72).

15 Allen I 64:275–7 / CHR[3] 56

16 *Erasmus and Cambridge: The Cambridge Letters of Erasmus* trans D.F.S. Thomson, intro H.C. Porter (Toronto 1963) 41

17 Ep 296:161–4

18 Basel MS A.IX.56. This collection, a considerable amount of which appears to be printer's copy, is described and analysed in Husner 132–46.

19 Husner 140. All the manuscript paper bears a Basel watermark.

Letter 1

109

1 In the 1524 edition the caption reads 'To Heliodorus in praise of the solitary life.'
2 Erasmus' summary followed the letter in the 1516 edition but preceded it in the 1524 edition. In this volume all summaries are placed before the letters.
3 See 134 below. The letter was written in 374. Jerome, however, would have been forty-two or forty-three according to the date of birth Erasmus gives in his life of the saint.

117

4 This is the incipit in the English version. The incipit in Erasmus' edition is 'Quanto amore.'
5 Hilberg however reads *necessitas*.
6 Hab 3:7
7 Possibly *Naturalis historia* 19.7–25

118

8 In the 1524 edition Erasmus replaced 'fornicates' with 'lapses into unchastity.'
9 Sentence added in 1524

119

10 *Epitoma rei militaris* 2.5
11 An analogy but not a derivation is suggested by St John Chrysostom and Theodore of Mopsuestia. Cf Hugh M. Riley *Christian Initiation* (Washington 1974) 116, 119, 193, 201–2, 208–9.
12 Erasmus refers to Jerome Ep 60. The next letter in this volume is addressed to Nepotian.
13 The last two sentences were added in 1524.
14 This is a criticism Erasmus frequently makes. See his *Enchiridion* CWE 66 16 and 127.

120

15 *Aeneid* 4.366–7
16 Actually the word in Erasmus' text of Jerome's letter is *vernulae*, although he has substituted *vernaculi* in introducing the *scholium*. 'Or *vernuli*' was added in 1524.
17 Erasmus complains about this particular passage in Ep 308:35–7 and asks Gregor Reisch's advice in reading it.
18 Persius *Satires* 3.16–18
19 *Epidicus* 5.2.62
20 The Latin word in Jerome's text is *congeminet*, which literally means 'she duplicates' or 'she repeats.'
21 *Aeneid* 12.59

121

22 Luke 9:59–60. Erasmus has added 'and mother' to the first scriptural verse.
23 Cf Erasmus' annotation on Ephesians 5:18 (*in quo luxus est*) LB VI 853D–854D.
24 *Aeneid* 7.337
25 The phrase that Jerome uses is *publicarum libidinum victimae*, that is, 'victims of public lust,' an expression borrowed from Tertullian *De cultu feminarum* 2.12.
26 Virgil *Aeneid* 3.420–32; Homer *Odyssey* 12.234–43; Pliny *Naturalis historia* 3.83

122

27 Nevertheless the reading in Erasmus' text of Jerome's letter is *Scyllaceum*.
28 *Aeneid* 3.553
29 Luke 4:24
30 1 Tim 3:8
31 Sentence added in 1524
32 This is the reading in Erasmus' text of Jerome's letter, although introducing the *scholium* he has 'the heresy of the neophytes.' See 'Nicolaitans' in ODCC.
33 Ie in the *Decretum Gratiani*, secunda pars, causa 24, quaestio 3
34 PL 42 26

123

35 Erasmus is refering to Jerome's first letter to Paulinus of Nola and is quoting a passage from it (Ep 53.8). See Letter 6 below.
36 Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion made Greek translations of the Old Testament in the second century AD.
37 Sentence added in 1533. The first allusion is to Matt 27:51, the other is to Rev 2:5.
38 The literal expression in Jerome is 'tribe to tribe shall smite the breast.'
39 Erasmus captioned this section devoted to a rhetorical analysis of the letter to Heliodorus *Artis annotatio*. It is the only commentary of this kind in the edition. There is an extended discussion of this commentary in Chomarat 536–40. As we mentioned in our introductory note this letter was highly praised as a rhetorical model in Erasmus' *De conscribendis epistolis* CWE 25 97.

124

40 *Rhetoric* 1.3.3
41 *De partitione oratoria* 17; *De inventione* 1.56
42 This is our incipit. Erasmus' lemma in this instance is 'Quanto studio.'
43 Quintilian 3.8.6–10

125

44 Quintilian 5.13.53
45 Quintilian 8.5.9; also 5.10.1–2 and 5.14.1–2
46 Ie an *epiphonema*; Quintilian 8.5.11
47 The term Erasmus uses for this figure is *enantiosis*; Quintilian 9.2.106.
48 Ie *per correctionem*. Cf *De oratore* 3.53.204; Quintilian 9.1.30.

126

49 Quintilian 3.8.69
50 Quintilian 4.1.76–7
51 Quintilian 4.3.1
52 The *mihi* in Jerome's Latin text is an ethical dative and emphasizes, as Erasmus points out, his sense of concern or displeasure regarding Heliodorus.

127

53 *Epitoma rei militaris* 2.20
54 Ep 60.9
55 *Ars poetica* 319–20. The phrase is 'morataque recte fabula.'
56 Quintilian 8.6.2ff
57 Quintilian 7.3.2

128

58 Quintilian 3.8.26–7
59 These were crowns awarded to Roman soldiers for various achievements. See OCD sv 'Crowns and Wreaths.'
60 See the relevant annotations in the preceding section and nn15, 18, 21.
61 Quintilian 9.2.40
62 Quintilian 6.2.8ff

129

63 Cf Eph 6:1, but also Matt 10:37.
64 Quintilian 7.4.1–2
65 'Theologians' was changed to 'philosophers' in 1524.
66 Cf Erasmus' dedication to his *Parabolae sive similia* CWE 23 130–1.
67 Quintilian 9.3.71

130

68 Matt 8:20
69 Quintilian 5.8.5
70 Quintilian 5.10.30–1
71 Quintilian 5.10.55
72 Cf Quintilian 5.11.23. Similar advice is given in Jerome's letter to the monk Rusticus (Ep 125.2).
73 Ie *per subjectionem*. Cf *Rhetorica ad Herennium* 4.23.33.
74 Re *inductio* and *gradatio*, the two terms Erasmus uses, see Quintilian 5.11.2ff and 9.3.54ff.

131

75 Possibly Quintilian 9.2.61
76 Quintilian 6.2.1ff
77 Quintilian 6.2.8–9
78 Quintilian 9.2.38
79 A reference to his dogs is in Jerome's *Apologia contra Rufinum* 1.1 PL 23 397 / Jerome *Dogmatic* 59. Jerome is quoting Ps 68:24. He also calls his detractors

'mad dogs who bark and rage against me' in his preface to the books of Kings (Fremantle 490).

80 Erasmus discusses this story and its source at some length in his life of St Jerome. See 54–5 above.

81 Neoptolemus was the son of Achilles and one of the Greek heroes of the Trojan War. This reference is to a remark of his in Ennius' *Annales* quoted in Cicero's *De oratore* 2.37.156 and in Aulus Gellius 5.15.9. A speaker in *De oratore* says that he approves of philosophy as long as it is kept within limits, and he quotes Neoptolemus to support his moderate approach. 'I have determined to philosophize,' he says, 'as Neoptolemus says in Ennius, "in a few things, for I don't want to do so in all ways."'

132

82 The bee analogy is used in St Basil's famous discourse *Ad adolescentes*, where he urged Christian youth to study Greek literature and extract only the best, and also in Lorenzo Valla's *Elegantiae latinae linguae* 4 preface, where it is applied to the ancient Fathers.

83 Cf Ep 125.

84 See 112 above.

85 Heb 6:4–6

133

86 1 Cor 7:29–31

Letter 2

134

1 The phrase 'of the popes' was added in 1524.

145

2 Quintilian 4.3.1–2

3 See sections 4 and 5 of this letter.

4 The annotation was added in 1524.

5 *Georgics* 3.53

6 *Georgics* 2.483–4

7 *Brevis expositio Vergilii Georgicorum* 2.484

8 *Naturalis historia* 11.90.221–2

9 *Eclogues* 9.51

10 *Rhetoric* 2.14

11 Ie the Latin verb *obliviscor* is normally deponent.

146

12 7.2.12

13 Ie the double *e* in *eleemosyna* is pronounced as one *e*, whereas in Greek there are two syllables. The meaning of the word in Greek is also different.

14 *Cato maior* 5.13

15 *Longaevi* 23
16 *Cato maior* 5.13
17 Diogenes Laertius 8.44
18 *Longaevi* 18. Erasmus' translation is in ASD I-1 623–7. See also Craig R. Thompson 'Erasmus' Translation of Lucian's *Longaevi*' *Classical Philology* 35 (1940) 397–415.
19 Diogenes Laertius 9.43. The sentence was added in 1533.
20 *Longaevi* 19
21 *Longaevi* 19
22 Ovid *Ars amatoria* 2.4
23 *Adagia* II vii 61

147

24 Valerius Maximus 8.7.13
25 *Longaevi* 26
26 *Suidas* sv Στησίχορος. See also Plato *Phaedrus* 243.
27 *Adagia* I ii 55
28 *Longaevi* 24
29 Valerius Maximus 8.7.12 and *Cato maior* 7.22
30 Valerius Maximus 8.7.1
31 *Iliad* 1.249 (quoted also in *Cato maior* 10.31)
32 Erasmus corrected the Vulgate reading of Luke 12:49 in Jerome's text. See his annotation (*Et quid volo...*) LB VI 287D–E.
33 See Quintilian 8.5.11.
34 See the second annotation, on 'As a young man,' above.

148

35 Erasmus is discussing alternate readings in Jeremiah 12:13. The problem arises because the Greek word κλῆρος, as Jerome has indicated, can mean either 'portion' or 'clergy.'
36 *Decretum Gratiani*, distinctio 21 has taken over the definition of various clerical offices from Isidore of Seville *Etymologiae* 7.12.
37 Ie μήτηρ means 'mother,' μέτρον means 'measure' or 'size.' Isidore confuses the two in his explanation.
38 The reference is to Peter Lombard in *Sententiae* 4.24.8 and 17.
39 Sentence added in 1524
40 *Adagia* I x 61
41 *Pandects* or *Digest* of Justinian, books 30–3

149

42 *Naturalis historia* 18.20.85–7
43 Juvenal *Satires* 4.141–3
44 *Adagia* I vi 94
45 Titus 1:9
46 2 Tim 3:14
47 1 Pet 3:15
48 Mal 1:6

49 Valerius Maximus 6.2.2. Jerome in this passage in his letter is quoting Cicero *De oratore* 3.1.

50 The expression in the Latin text of Jerome is *attrita frons*, that is, 'a rubbed or smoothed-out brow.' It is idiomatic for 'shamelessness' or 'impudence.' See Juvenal *Satires* 13.242 and Ezek 3:7 (Vulgate).

150

51 Erasmus in his annotation refers to John 20:1 and Luke 23:56–24:1. The two evangelists, however, do not disagree about the day of the resurrection. Both say the women came to the tomb on 'the first day of the week.' The confusing term 'the second-first Sabbath' occurs in the Greek text of Luke 6:1. See *Jerome Biblical Commentary* 44:64. In 1524 Erasmus changed this annotation to read: 'The term in Greek is a compound of "second" and "first," like "Gallo-Greek" and "serio-comic." The place where it appears is in Luke 6. Whoever wishes to know more about this may read my annotation [on Luke 6:1 (*In sabbato secundo-primo*) LB VI 252F–254D], where in one way or another I have explained the term according to Theophylact and Chrysostom. Unravelling this knot is not particularly relevant to the argument here.'

52 Pliny the Younger *Epistles* 2.14

53 See the annotation 'a head that has worn a cap' in the preceding letter, section 2.

54 *Naturalis historia* 19.2.7ff

55 Hilberg has the same reading as Erasmus.

56 *Naturalis historia* 14.29.149

57 *Naturalis historia* 22.25.82. The drink referred to is a kind of beer.

58 *Georgics* 3.380

59 *Naturalis historia* 14.20.113

60 *Naturalis historia* 14.19.102

61 *Naturalis historia* 14.19.105ff

151

62 *Satires* 2.2.53

63 *Georgics* 2.506. Erasmus misquotes Virgil, who actually wrote 'to drink from a goblet.'

64 Num 15:37ff and Deut 22:12

65 Deut 6:8 and Matt 23:5

66 HO IX 33 verso E. This reference to *Commentarium in Matthaeum* book 4 is not in PL.

67 Acts 20:35, where St Paul cites a saying of Jesus

68 1 Tim 3:2

69 Erasmus develops the same theme in this antidote and its postscripts that he did in the antidote appended to the preceding letter, namely, that Jerome is overstating his case when he demands poverty of Christians. Erasmus' comments nevertheless are highly critical of clerical wealth and worldliness, and in the second postscript they are particularly incisive. What we have termed a 'postscript' Erasmus has simply labelled *Aliud* 'Another.' The reason for this division in the antidote is somewhat puzzling.

Letter 3

155

1 For background and comment see Kelly 99–103.
2 Ep 130.19
3 Rufinus *Apologia in S. Hieronymum* 2.5 PL 21 537
4 *Dialogi* 1.8–9

182

5 Gen 19:17
6 1 Cor 5:12
7 Hab 1:13–17 (LXX)
8 Luke 22:31
9 Amos 8:13
10 Erasmus is explaining why there is a discrepancy between *virgines bonae* 'good virgins' in Jerome's text and *virgines pulchrae* 'fair virgins' in the Vulgate.
11 Isa 47:1–3
12 Jer 13:26
13 Ezek 16:25
14 Jer 2:16 (Vulgate)
15 Isa 34:13–15

183

16 The Latin is literally *ante hominem suum* 'before their man.' Erasmus' reading here is the same as Hilberg's.
17 Deut 23:3–4
18 Actually 1 Kings 19:5–6
19 Lev 8:26
20 Exod 15:23–5
21 2 Kings 6:18–23
22 Isa 14:13. Jerome also quoted this verse earlier in the letter, in section 4.
23 Erasmus probably refers to Isa 3:16 (Vulgate).
24 This deficiency was made up in the English text by adding 'Some go so far as to take potions.'

184

25 Hilberg's text reads 'to appear,' that is, *videre* instead of *vivere*.
26 *De haeresibus ad Quodvultdeum* 46 PL 42 37
27 The adverb is *consequenter*.
28 Erasmus' text actually reads: 'And from their shoulders flutters perchance a hyacinth-coloured mantle.' *Hiacynthina laena* is an expression found in Persius *Satires* 1.32.
29 *Aeneid* 9.616

185

30 Ep 130.19
31 Erasmus is asking whether the reading here should be *lurcosius* 'more greedily' or *lucrosius* 'a higher price.' Both his text and Hilberg's have *lucrosius*.

32 Rom 12:19. The term, however, also came to refer to women who lived as concubines with the unmarried clergy.
33 The term means 'one who marries but once' or 'one who has only one spouse.'
34 *Dialogi* 1.9
35 In 1524 the following annotation, still an erroneous explanation, replaced the 1516 one: 'The *Bastarnae* [*sic*] are a barbarian people beyond Germany from where slaves came, so it seems, who were kept on platforms and in cages when put on sale in Rome. Strabo mentions them in the seventh book of the *Geographia*, although he confesses that that tribe is not known to him. He thinks however that they are on the border between the Germans and the people of Epirus.'
In 1533 Erasmus again changed the annotation to read: 'He called luxurious litters, in which wealthy matrons were carried through the city preceded by a crowd of eunuchs, *basternae*. Jerome mentions this word in his commentary on chapter 66 of Isaiah. Aelius Lampridius used the same word in his life of Heliogabalus [21.7, a part of the *Historia Augusta scriptores*], as does Ammianus Marcellinus in book 14 [14.6.16]. Moreover Jerome calls *basternae* cages [that is, *caveae*] because their lattice-work gives them the appearance of cages. Thus there is the oft-repeated remark of a certain person who when he saw a matron being carried in a litter said that a cage was not only for a wild animal, meaning that so evil a beast should also be shut up in an iron cage. It appears that this kind of vehicle took its name from the people [that is, the *Basternae*], whence perhaps it had been brought to Rome. For Strabo in book 7 mentions the *Bastarnae* and says they are beyond Germany on the border between the Germans and the people of Epirus. However the name of the tribe is spelled with an *a*, *Bastarnae*, the name of the vehicle with an *e*, *basternae*.'

186

36 *Suidas* N 489 Adler. This appears to be a reference to the fourth-century bishop of Lampsakos, Parthenius or Parthenus. See PG 114 (Paris 1864) 1345–66.
37 See this letter, section 34. The terms are mostly Greek derivatives.
38 *Phormio* 342 and 344 (Loeb)
39 Hos 7:4
40 Ps 38 (AV 39):6
41 1 Cor 7:34. The Latin word *mulier* which is used here can mean both 'woman' and 'married woman' or 'wife.' Hence the comment. Jerome quotes this same text below (section 21), and Erasmus comments on it there.
42 Matt 3:9 and Zech 9:16

187

43 Ezek 1:15–21
44 The coat is the coat without seam spoken of in John 19:23. Erasmus comments further on this passage in the addendum at the end of this letter.
45 *Naturalis historia* 7.3
46 The term 'sophistical theologians' was changed to *scioli* 'men of little learning,' a favourite term of Jerome's, in 1524.

47 The term *unio* is also the word Jerome uses in speaking of 'the singleness of God.' Erasmus in this annotation uses three different Latin words for pearl: *concha, margaritum,* and *unio.*
48 *Naturalis historia* 9.21.54 and 9.23.56
49 Matt 10:10
50 Acts 12:8
51 Isa 28:24

188

52 Possibly a reference to Rom 16:1
53 Ps 128:3
54 Erasmus cites the passage from 1 Cor 7:34 in an annotation in section 18 above. He discusses it at length in his annotation (*Et divisus est*) LB VI 690F–691D.
55 St Ambrose (c 339–97), bishop of Milan, was born at Trier, son of the praetorian prefect of Gaul.
56 Julius Pollux was a second-century Greek lexicographer. Jerome is quoting the Song of Solomon 5:7.
57 Isa 26:20
58 Dan 6:11
59 Persius *Satires* 1.28 (Loeb)
60 1 Cor 11:14

189

61 Ep 125. The name Antimus appears as Antonius in Erasmus' text. Neither man is identifiable.
62 Erasmus' text of Jerome's letter has the compound Greek word γερανοπίπης, which Erasmus transcribes in his annotation as *geranopopa.* The word is not in Hilberg's text.
63 *Birds* 306
64 The second part of this sentence was added in 1524.
65 The fable is the story of the eighth labour of Hercules, during which he slew Diomedes and took captive his man-eating horses.
66 The words are *delumbis saliva* 'sickly taste,' from Persius *Satires* 1.104.

190

67 Erasmus also discusses this account in his *Life of Jerome* 50–2 above. See also Kelly 41–3.
68 *Apologia contra Rufinum* 1.30–1 PL 23 421–4
69 Ep 70. See Letter 5 below.
70 The phrase 'more wholesome literature' was changed to 'weightier studies' in 1524. What Erasmus appears to be referring to here is a stipulation in the bull *Apostolici regiminis* of 19 December 1513, although it does not seem to be entirely applicable to the argument he is making. See *Disciplinary Decrees of the General Councils* ed H.J. Schroeder (St Louis 1937) 488.
71 *Antibarbari* CWE 23 19–22
72 Possibly a reference to *Naturalis historia* 33.133, though Aristotle is not mentioned in these ranks.

191

73 Jude 12. On food baskets [*sportulae*] see Juvenal *Satires* 1.95–6. These last two sentences were added in 1524.
74 This adage is the first in Erasmus' *Adagia*. See CWE 31 29–30.
75 Aulus Gellius 1.9.12
76 Erasmus' text of Jerome's letter has this latter reading, although his lemma gives the variant he rejects. Both Fremantle and Hilberg have the variant reading.
77 *Naturalis historia* 5.15.73; Josephus *Bellum judaicum* 2.8; Philo as quoted in Eusebius *Praeparatio evangelica* 8.11. See also ODCC sv 'Essenes.'

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78 *Catalogus illustrium virorum* 11 PL 23 625–30. Erasmus like Jerome gives this quotation in both Greek and Latin. See also Ep 70.3 (Letter 5.3 below)
79 See Ep 70.3 (Letter 5.3 below)
80 2 Tim 1:15 and 1 Tim 1:19–20
81 This sentence was replaced in the 1524 edition by the following: 'What the Latins call *volumina* [volumes], derived from the verb to roll up or to roll out, the Greeks call τόμοι [tomes], which comes from the verb to cut, because they are cut from the skins of animals.'
82 Isa 8:1, 3. Erasmus' text in his annotation differs slightly from Jerome's version, and both differ from Fremantle's rendition.
83 Exod 15:20–1
84 Eccles 3:5. Erasmus in the addendum refers to three statements from section 19 of Jerome's letter.
85 See the annotation above on this comment in section 19 and n44.
86 See section 19 of Jerome's letter.

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87 This entire paragraph was added to the addendum in 1533. The passage Erasmus refers to is the beginning of section 23 of the letter. He discusses it in the same vein in his *Life of Jerome* in a paragraph also added in 1533. See 48–9 above.
88 *Eclogues* 6.63
89 See Ep 48.20.
90 Section 23

Letter 4

194

1 See also T.C. Lawler 'Jerome's First Letter to Damasus' in *Kyriakon: Festschrift Johannes Quasten* 2 vols (Münster 1970) II 548–52
2 The Greek term *hypostasis* was being used in theological discussion in the East at this time to signify a person. Jerome, however, understood the term to mean substance or essence, and he refused to accept it in a profession of faith. The issue concerned the use of the term in reference to the three Persons in the Trinity.

3 The Campenses were the followers of Meletius, one of the rival claimants to the see of Antioch at this time.

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4 John 19:23
5 Song of Sol 2:15
6 2 Pet 2:17
7 Jer 2:3; This sentence was added in 1533.
8 Actually Zech 9:11; This sentence was also added in 1533.
9 Song of Sol 4:12
10 *Aeneid* 6.724
11 Luke 17:37
12 Ps 103.5
13 Luke 15:11–32
14 Matt 13:23
15 2 Tim 2:20

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16 Ps 2:9
17 The phrase 'in my opinion' was added in 1524 to this very controversial remark. The scriptural reference is to Matt 16:18: 'Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church.' Erasmus discusses it at length in his annotation on Matthew 16:18 (*Quia tu es*) LB VI 88C–F.
18 Matt 26:18. The section beginning 'or at least not be hostile to it' was added in 1524.
19 Exod 12:46. This last sentence was added in 1533.
20 See Erasmus' *Life of Jerome* 30–3 above.
21 Theophilus was patriarch of Alexandria from 385 to 412.

199

22 Lucifer, bishop of Cagliari, was a fierce opponent of Arianism. His consecration of Paulinus as bishop of Antioch in 362 led to the schism there that Jerome is discussing. Jerome wrote against his followers, whom he calls Luciferians. See Kelly 62–4.
23 The term *homoousion* means 'of one substance' and is used in the Nicene Creed to express the unity of Father and Son in the Trinity. The Macedonians were the followers of Macedonius, a bishop of Constantinople in the mid-fourth century and an exponent of semi-Arianism. Their watchword was *homoiousion*, that is, 'of like substance.' See ODCC svv 'Homoousion,' 'Macedonius,' and 'Semiarianism.'
24 It appears that Erasmus is mistaken in relating the name Compenses to the Greek *campe*. The group was so called because they had no church in Antioch and met outside the city in the open air (*campus*).
25 See n2 above.
26 Heb 1:3: 'the express image of his person'
27 Heb 11:1: 'Now faith is the substance of things hoped for'; 2 Cor 9:4: 'in this same confident boasting'
28 See ODCC sv 'Nicaea, First Council of (325).'

29 Erasmus refers to the Council of Alexandria held in 362. It affirmed the use of the term *homoousion* and sought to clear up misunderstandings about the meaning of the term *hypostasis*.
30 St Athanasius (c 296–373), bishop of Alexandria and staunch opponent of Arianism, was influential in working out the settlement at the Council of Alexandria. He had been forced into exile several times.

200
31 Quintilian 3.6.23
32 See Letter 1.2 above and Erasmus' annotation 'fealty to him.'
33 Liberius had been forced by the emperor Constantius to sign an Arian formulary. His death in 366 was followed by the double election and violent struggle that Erasmus describes. See ODCC svv 'Damasus' and 'Liberius.'

Letter 5

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1 Seneca the Elder *Controversiae* 10 pr 10

205
2 Aratus was a third-century BC Greek poet. His *Phaenomena*, quoted by St Paul, was his best known work. On Paul's discourse at the Areopagus see *Jerome Biblical Commentary* 45:85–6 and Werner Jaeger *Early Christianity and Greek Paideia* (Oxford 1969) 11–12, 111–12.
3 Acts 17:23
4 *Lives of the Sophists* 1.2
5 *Historiarum adversus paganos libri* VII 7.30. See also ODCC sv 'Julian the Apostate.'

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6 Quintilian 4.2.3 and 9.2.40
7 Jerome makes this same reference in his *Apologia contra Rufinum* 1.30 PL 23 421 / Jerome *Dogmatic* 99, where he accuses Rufinus of having incited Magnus to write his letter questioning him. Jerome confuses, however, a general Calpurnius Bestia mentioned in Sallust's *Jugurtha* with a Calpurnius Lanarius, a treacherous friend mentioned by Plutarch in the *Lives* (*Sertorius* 7.2).

Letter 6

207
1 On Paulinus and this correspondence see Kelly 192–4.

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2 Paulinus' letter is not extant.
3 Valerius Maximus 8.7 and Diogenes Laertius 8.2–3

4 Diogenes Laertius 8.3
5 Diogenes Laertius 8.3. See also Ovid *Metamorphoses* 15.61–2.

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6 Valerius Maximus 8.7 and Diogenes Laertius 3
7 Not Euclid the mathematician but Euclides the philosopher and colleague of Socrates; Diogenes Laertius 2.106–12 and 3.6
8 Plutarch *Lucullus* 2 and Diogenes Laertius 3.6
9 Valerius Maximus 8.7
10 Horace *Odes* 1.28
11 Valerius Maximus 8.7. The third name in Valerius is Echecrates.
12 Valerius Maximus 8.7. The reference, however, is to Pythagoras.
13 *Naturalis historia* 3.5.42
14 Ovid *Metamorphoses* 15.8–16
15 Valerius Maximus 8.7
16 Diogenes Laertius 3.18–20 gives the rest of the story as well. See also Plutarch *Dion* 4 and 5.

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17 The entire account of this incident, that is, the rest of this annotation, was omitted in 1533. Erasmus also refers to this incident in his famous letter to Maarten van Dorp of 1515 (Ep 337:710–18). The English theologian about whom this story is told is Henry Standish (d 1535), then warden of the Franciscans in London and in 1518 bishop of St Asaph. He was a court preacher and a favourite of Henry VIII, but a man Erasmus 'abhorred.' See Allen Ep 608:14n. The omission of this lengthy account in 1533 as England was fast moving towards the breach with Rome is interesting. As we mentioned in our introduction (see xxviii–ix above) Thomas More referred to the story about Standish in this annotation in his letter to Erasmus of 31 October 1516 (Ep 481:44–5). It is evidence that the edition of Jerome was already being attentively read in England and also that the story of this 'very humorous incident' was reaching a wider public audience. Erasmus recounts another incident in which Standish is ridiculed in *Adagia* II v 98, as well as several other episodes involving Standish in a letter of 31 July 1520 (Ep 1126).
18 This last phrase is omitted in 1524.
19 The reference is to Guillaume LeBreton, a thirteenth-century Franciscan who wrote commentaries on St Jerome's scriptural prefaces. The letter to Paulinus was frequently used as a preface to Holy Scripture.
20 Nicholas of Lyra (c 1270–1340), biblical scholar and exegete and author of extensive commentaries on Scripture, the first to be printed (Rome 1471–2)
21 Erasmus will explain this passage in two annotations that follow below: 'Hiarcas sitting upon his golden throne' and 'drinking from his Tantalus-fountain.'

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22 The two readings in Latin are 'maior emente se fuit' and 'maiore mente se fuit.' The former in the Jerome text is correct. The one suggested by Standish is faulty.

23 Lord Mountjoy (William Blount), an important English nobleman, was one of Erasmus' most faithful friends and patrons. A student of Erasmus in Paris, it was he who had invited Erasmus to England in 1499. Erasmus dedicated his first work, the *Adagia*, to him in 1500.
24 Pliny *Epistles* 2.3.8
25 That is, from 41 to 98 AD
26 Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, an extensive and not too trustworthy account of the wanderings and strange adventures of Apollonius, dates from the early third century. See OCD sv 'Philostrati.'
27 The last clause was added in 1524, and at the same time the puzzling sentence that follows was omitted. The Pison is mentioned in Genesis 2:11 as a river flowing out of Eden. Pliny *Naturalis historia* 6.22.65 discusses the Ganges but has only the briefest reference to the Brahmans as a race of India (6.21.64).

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28 Philostratus *Life of Apollonius* 1.18 and 3.15
29 Ibidem 3.16ff
30 Ibidem 3.25
31 Ibidem 3.32
32 Pliny *Naturalis historia* 7.2.22 and Valerius Maximus 3.3 ext 6

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33 Herodotus 3.17–18; Solinus 3.10–11; and Pomponius Mela 3.9.2
34 Gal 1:17–18
35 Gal 2:1–2
36 The inscription translates the Hebrew *gittith* or *gath*. The exact meaning is not clear. Pss 8, 80, and 83 are the Vulgate numbers.
37 Hilary in his *Prologus in Cantica quindecim graduum* (PL 9 644–5). Erasmus in the dedicatory preface to his edition of Hilary (Ep 1334:674–701) discusses Hilary's work on the Psalms and Jerome's comments. See J.C. Olin *Six Essays on Erasmus* (New York 1979) 111.
38 This is quoted verbatim from Quintilian 2.2.8, not from Cicero's *Tusculan Disputations*.
39 Pliny *Epistles* 2.3.9
40 Cf Quintilian 6.2.32 and 8.3.61 and *Life of Jerome* n10 above.

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41 Pliny *Epistles* 2.3.10. Erasmus gives Aeschines' remark in both Greek and Latin. The anecdote is also in Cicero *De oratore* 3.56 and Quintilian 11.3.7.
42 Acts 5:34
43 Acts 22:3
44 2 Cor 10:4–6
45 Jerome's text in Erasmus' edition has 'the prophet Malachi,' although the quotation that follows in the letter is from Hag 2:11.
46 Mal 2:7

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47 Erasmus is commenting on the quotation from Deut 32:7 in Jerome's letter.

48 Ps 1:3
49 The reading in PL 22 544 is the same as Erasmus'.
50 PL 19 902–5. See OCD sv 'cento.'
51 PL 19 801–18. Proba was a fourth-century Christian poetess who, borrowing from Virgil, composed a cento on parts of Scripture.
52 *Aeneid* 6.563
53 PL 19 902–3
54 Erasmus replaced 'mother of Christ' [*Christiparam*] with 'and mother' [*ac matrem*] in 1524.
55 *De doctrina christiana* 2.18 and 2.40
56 *Eclogues* 4.6. On interpreting this Fourth or Messianic Eclogue see ODCC sv 'Virgil.'
57 *Aeneid* 1.664

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58 *Aeneid* 2.650
59 Plato *Apology* 21–3 and 29
60 Erasmus uses a Greek term, *κατὰντίφρασιν*, in describing Jerome's manner of speech here. See Quintilian 9.2.47.
61 This lemma is not in the English text, nor is it in Migne. See PL 22 545 note b.
62 1 Cor 14:19
63 Cf Quintilian 5.14.5ff. Erasmus' explanation focuses on the four parts (and terms) mentioned by Jerome in his letter: *propositio, assumptio, confirmatio,* and *conclusio.*
64 Joel 2:29

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65 Isa 2–4
66 The 'psalms of the fifteen steps' are Psalms 120 to 134, known also as gradual psalms or 'songs of ascents.' They were probably sung by pilgrims 'going up' to Jerusalem. They were interpreted by the Fathers in the sense Jerome (and Erasmus) will indicate. See annotation 'from one to fifteen' below.
67 Ps 125:1
68 Acts 1:15
69 See n66 above.
70 Amos 7:1
71 PL 25 1151–2. See also Mic 1:1.
72 So Jerome says in PL 25 1152. Actually the meaning of Moresheth is uncertain.
73 Rom 8:17
74 The meaning of the name is uncertain.
75 The exact meaning of the word is uncertain.
76 Actually it means 'the Lord remembers.'
77 PL 25 1420

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78 PL 25 787. The first four chapters of Lamentations are acrostics in which each verse begins with successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet.
79 Aulus Gellius 5.14.1 reports that he was called *Pleistonices.* It is Josephus in his

Antiquitates judaicae 1.15.1 who uses the epithet *Polyhistor*. Jerome mentions this work, which was written against Appio of Alexandria, a second-century grammarian and historian, in his letter to Magnus. See Letter 5.3 above.

80 Dan 1:17, 20

81 Dan 9:23 (Vulgate). Erasmus retains this reading in his text of Jerome's letter. See PL 22 547 note c.

82 Simonides was an early Greek lyric poet. In 1524 Erasmus replaced the word *gentilis* for 'pagan' with *ethnicus*, a change he made in several other instances as well.

83 That is, the son of the emperor Gordian I (238 AD)

84 Spartianus *Caracallus* 4.4 (in *Historia Augusta scriptores*) and Macrobius *Saturnalia* 3.9.6. The annotation erroneously ascribes the life of Caracalla to Macrobius.

85 Ps 57:8 (AV)

86 2 Kings 12:25 (Vulgate) or 2 Samuel 12:25 (AV). Jerome's text gives the Vulgate translation *amabilis domini*, that is, 'beloved of the Lord.'

87 That is, the Song of Solomon

88 *Paralipomenon* is the name given in the Septuagint and the Vulgate to the two books of Chronicles. Its Greek title refers to 'things omitted' in the preceding books of Samuel and Kings.

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89 PL 28 1403. The third and fourth books of Ezra are apocryphal.

90 Erasmus has discussed this same construction in the annotation 'to be ignorant of your ignorance' in section 7 above.

91 Jerome discusses the authorship of Hebrews in his *Catalogus illustrium virorum* 5 (PL 23 617–19). Hebrews was not accepted canonically in the West before 350. Many Greek Fathers did not accept the Apocalypse.

92 Paul's Epistle to Philemon is a plea on behalf of Onesimus, Philemon's runaway slave, whom Paul had converted.

93 *De inventione* 1.6

94 Possibly Aulus Gellius 10.5.3. This saying, attributed to Seneca, was often cited by the Fathers. See PL 22 549 note c.

95 Cf Col 1:5.

THE AMERBACHS' PREFACES

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1 Allen Ep 396 introduction. Cf Allen Ep 331 introduction, where he also expresses doubt about the Amerbachs' 'ostensible labours as editors.'

2 See 10–11 above and CHR[3] 55–6.

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3 This story is told in Strabo 13.1.54 and Plutarch *Sulla* 26.1. Scepsis is a city in the north-west corner of Asia Minor. Neleus was the pupil of Theophrastus, who was the colleague and successor of Aristotle. He inherited the library of Theophrastus and of Aristotle and brought it to Scepsis.

4 Work on an edition of Jerome was started as early as 1507. See AK Epp 335, 391, and numerous others indexed in AK I and II under Hieronymus.
5 See introduction n25.

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6 The elder Amerbach died in December 1513, several months prior to Erasmus' arrival in Basel.
7 Isocrates 1.2
8 See OCD SV Aristarchus (2).
9 Ie Ermolao Barbaro (1453–93), an Italian scholar whose *Castigationes Plinianae*, published in Rome in 1492, corrected many of the errors in Pliny's *Naturalis historia*.
10 On Guillaume Cop see 85–6 above and n9.
11 Guillaume Budé (1467–1540), the great French classical scholar, published a major work on the *Pandects* (a digest of the writings and opinions of the Roman jurists) in 1508.
12 Udalricus Zasius (1461–1535) was an eminent legal scholar and professor of civil law at the University of Freiburg. He had become a close and lifelong friend of Erasmus. For the reference here (as well as for the theme of this passage) see Ep 862.

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13 Theodorus Gaza (d 1475) and Joannes Argyropoulos (1410–90) were Greek scholars who taught in Italy. Leonardo Bruni of Arezzo (1369–1444), one of the leading Florentine humanists, had translated Aristotle's *Ethics* and *Politics*.
14 The reference is to the most difficult of Hercules' labours, his struggle with the Lernaean hydra. See *Adagia* III i 1.
15 That is, on Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel. Jerome's commentary is printed in a double column and surrounds the Latin text of Scripture, which is placed in the centre of the page. The volume has 287 folios.
16 Jerome's preface to his translation of two homilies of Origen on the Song of Songs PL 23 1117 and Ep 84.7

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WORKS FREQUENTLY CITED

SHORT-TITLE FORMS
FOR ERASMUS' WORKS

INDEX

WORKS FREQUENTLY CITED

This list provides bibliographical information for works referred to in short-title form in this volume. For Erasmus' writings see the short-title list, pages 284–7. Editions of his letters are included in the list below.

AK	Alfred Hartmann ed *Die Amerbach Korrespondenz* (Basel 1942–58) 5 vols
Allen	P.S. Allen, H.M. Allen, and H.W. Garrod eds *Opus epistolarum Des. Erasmi Roterodami* (Oxford 1906–58) 12 vols
ASD	*Opera omnia Desiderii Erasmi Roterodami* (Amsterdam 1969–)
CCL	*Corpus christianorum, series latina* vols 72–8: *S. Hieronymi presbyteri opera* (Turnhout 1959–70)
CEBR	*Contemporaries of Erasmus: A Biographical Register of the Renaissance and Reformation* ed P.G. Bietenholz and T.B. Deutscher 3 vols (Toronto 1985–7)
Chomarat	Jacques Chomarat *Grammaire et rhétorique chez Erasme* (Paris 1981) 2 vols
CHR[3]	John C. Olin ed *Christian Humanism and the Reformation: Selected Writings of Erasmus* 3rd ed (New York 1987)
Colloquia Erasmiana Turonensia	*Colloquia Erasmiana Turonensia: Douzième stage international* d'études humanistes, Tours 1969 ed J.-C. Margolin (Toronto 1972) 2 vols
CWE	*Collected Works of Erasmus* (Toronto 1974–)
Fremantle	*A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church* 2nd series, VI: *St. Jerome: Letters and Select Works* trans W.H. Fremantle (New York 1893)
Gorce	Denys Gorce 'La patristique dans la réforme d'Erasme' in *Festgabe Joseph Lortz* 2 vols (Baden-Baden 1958) I 233–76
Hilberg	*Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum* 54–6: I. Hilberg ed *Sancti Eusebii Hieronymi epistulae* (Vienna 1910–18)
HO	*Hieronymi opera* (Basel 1516) 9 vols. Later editions will be so indicated.
Husner	Fritz Husner 'Die Handschrift der Scholien des Erasmus von Rotterdam zu den Hieronymusbriefen' in *Festschrift Gustav Binz* (Basel 1935) 132–46
HV	*Hieronymi vita*, the composite text in *Opuscula* 134–90
Jerome *Dogmatic*	*Saint Jerome, Dogmatic and Polemical Works* trans John N. Hritzu (Washington 1965)
Jerome Biblical Comentary	*The Jerome Biblical Commentary* ed Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and Roland E. Murphy (Englewood Cliffs 1968) 2 vols
Kelly	J.N.D. Kelly *Jerome: His Life, Writings, and Controversies* (New York 1975)
LB	J. Leclerc ed *Desiderii Erasmi Roterodami opera omnia* (Leiden 1703–6) 10 vols
OCD	*The Oxford Classical Dictionary* ed N.G.L. Hammond and H.H. Scullard 2nd ed (Oxford 1970)

ODCC	*The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* ed F.L. Cross and E.A. Livingstone 2nd ed (London 1974)
Opuscula	W.K. Ferguson ed *Erasmi opuscula: A Supplement to the Opera omnia* (The Hague 1933)
PG	J.P. Migne ed *Patrologia cursus completus ... series graeca* (Paris 1857–1912) 162 vols
PL	J.P. Migne ed *Patrologia cursus completus ... series latina* (Paris 1844–64) 221 vols
Rice	Eugene F. Rice Jr *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance* (Baltimore 1985)
Wright	*Select Letters of St Jerome* trans F.A. Wright (Cambridge 1954)

SHORT-TITLE FORMS FOR ERASMUS' WORKS

Titles following colons are longer versions of the same, or are alternative titles. Items entirely enclosed in square brackets are of doubtful authorship. For abbreviations, see Works Frequently Cited.

Adagia: Adagiorum chiliades 1508, etc (Adagiorum collectanea for the primitive form, when required LB II / ASD II-4, 5, 6 / CWE 30–6
Admonitio adversus mendacium: Admonitio adversus mendacium et obtrectationem LB X
Annotationes in Novum Testamentum LB VI
Antibarbari LB IX / ASD I-1 / CWE 23
Apologia ad Caranzam: Apologia ad Sanctium Caranzam, or Apologia de tribus locis, or Responsio ad annotationem Stunicae ... a Sanctio Caranza defensam LB IX
Apologia ad Fabrum: Apologia ad Iacobum Fabrum Stapulensem LB IX
Apologia adversus monachos: Apologia adversus monachos quosdam hispanos LB IX
Apologia adversus Petrum Sutorem: Apologia adversus debacchationes Petri Sutoris LB IX
Apologia adversus rhapsodias Alberti Pii: Apologia ad viginti et quattuor libros A. Pii LB IX
Apologia contra Latomi dialogum: Apologia contra Iacobi Latomi dialogum de tribus linguis LB IX
Apologiae contra Stunicam: Apologiae contra Lopidem Stunicam LB IX / ASD IX-2
Apologia de 'In principio erat sermo' LB IX
Apologia de laude matrimonii: Apologia pro declamatione de laude matrimonii LB IX
Apologia de loco 'Omnes quidem': Apologia de loco 'Omnes quidem resurgemus' LB IX
Apologia qua respondet invectivis Lei: Apologia qua respondet duabus invectivis Eduardi Lei *Opuscula*
Apophthegmata LB IV
Appendix respondens ad Sutorem LB IX
Argumenta: Argumenta in omnes epistolas apostolicas nova (with Paraphrases)
Axiomata pro causa Lutheri: Axiomata pro causa Martini Lutheri *Opuscula*

Carmina varia LB VIII
Catalogus lucubrationum LB I
Christiani hominis institutum, carmen LB V
Ciceronianus: Dialogus Ciceronianus LB I / ASD I-2 / CWE 28
Colloquia LB I / ASD I-3
Compendium vitae Allen I / CWE 4
[Consilium: Consilium cuiusdam ex animo cupientis esse consultum] *Opuscula*

De bello turcico: Consultatio de bello turcico (in Psalmi)
De civilitate: De civilitate morum puerilium LB I / CWE 25

Declamatio de morte LB IV
Declamatiuncula LB IV
Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas: Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas sub nomine facultatis theologiae Parisiensis LB IX
De concordia: De sarcienda ecclesiae concordia, or De amabili ecclesiae concordia (in Psalmi)
De conscribendis epistolis LB I / ASD I-2 / CWE 25
De constructione: De constructione octo partium orationis, or Syntaxis LB I / ASD I-4
De contemptu mundi: Epistola de contemptu mundi LB V / ASD V-1 / CWE 66
De copia: De duplici copia verborum ac rerum LB I / ASD I-6 / CWE 24
De immensa Dei misericordia: Concio de immensa Dei misericordia LB V
De libero arbitrio: De libero arbitrio diatribe LB IX
De praeparatione: De praeparatione ad mortem LB V / ASD V-1
De pueris instituendis: De pueris statim ac liberaliter instituendis LB I / ASD I-2 / CWE 26
De puero Iesu: Concio de puero Iesu LB V / CWE 29
De puritate tabernaculi: De puritate tabernaculi sive ecclesiae christianae (in Psalmi)
De ratione studii LB I / ASD I-2 / CWE 24
De recta pronuntiatione: De recta latini graecique sermonis pronuntiatione LB I / ASD I-4 / CWE 26
Detectio praestigiarum: Detectio praestigiarum cuiusdam libelli germanice scripti LB X / ASD IX-1
De taedio Iesu: Disputatiuncula de taedio, pavore, tristicia Iesu LB V
De vidua christiana LB V / CWE 66
De virtute amplectenda: Oratio de virtute amplectenda LB V / CWE 29
[Dialogus bilinguium ac trilinguium: Chonradi Nastadiensis dialogus bilinguium ac trilinguium] *Opuscula* / CWE 7
Dilutio: Dilutio eorum quae Iodocus Clithoveus scripsit adversus declamationem suasoriam matrimonii
Divinationes ad notata Bedae LB IX

Ecclesiastes: Ecclesiastes sive de ratione concionandi LB V / ASD V-4
Elenchus in N. Bedae censuras LB IX
Enchiridion: Enchiridion militis christiani LB V / CWE 66
Encomium matrimonii (in De conscribendis epistolis)
Encomium medicinae: Declamatio in laudem artis medicae LB I / ASD I-4 / CWE 29
Epigrammata LB I
Epistola ad Dorpium LB IX / CWE 3
Epistola ad fratres Inferioris Germaniae: Responsio ad fratres Germaniae Inferioris ad epistolam apologeticam incerto autore proditam LB X / ASD IX-1
Epistola ad graculos: Epistola ad quosdam imprudentissimos graculos LB X
Epistola apologetica de Termino LB X
Epistola consolatoria: Epistola consolatoria virginibus sacris LB V
Epistola contra pseudevangelicos: Epistola contra quosdam qui se falso iactant evangelicos LB X / ASD IX-1
Epistola de esu carnium: Epistola apologetica ad Christophorum episcopum Basiliensem de interdicto esu carnium LB IX / ASD IX-1
Exomologesis: Exomologesis sive modus confitendi LB V

Explanatio symboli: Explanatio symboli apostolorum sive catechismus LB V / ASD V-1
Expositio concionalis (in Psalmi)
Expostulatio Iesu LB V

Formula: Conficiendarum epistolarum formula (see De conscribendis epistolis)

Hymni varii LB V
Hyperaspistes LB X

In Nucem Ovidii commentarius LB I / ASD I-1 / CWE 29
In Prudentium: Commentarius in duos hymnos Prudentii LB V / CWE 29
Institutio christiani matrimonii LB V
Institutio principis christiani LB IV / ASD IV-1 / CWE 27

[Julius exclusus: Dialogus Julius exclusus e coelis] *Opuscula* / CWE 27

Lingua LB IV / ASD IV-1A / CWE 29
Liturgia Virginis Matris: Virginis Matris apud Lauretum cultae liturgia LB V / ASD V-1

Methodus (see Ratio)
Modus orandi Deum LB V / ASD V-1
Moria: Moriae encomium LB IV / ASD IV-3 / CWE 27

Novum Testamentum: Novum Testamentum 1519 and later (Novum instrumentum for the first edition, 1516, when required) LB VI

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